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Editor-in-chief: **Kamal Abdullayev,**
*Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Baku International
Multiculturalism Center, Rector of the Azerbaijan University
of Languages, Writer, Academician*

Scientific Editors: **Farida Mammadova**
*Associate Member of Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences (ANAS),
Member of Azerbaijan National Academy of Creativity,
Honored Scientist of Azerbaijan, Laureate of the State Award
of the Republic, Holder of the Orders of Glory and the Golden Pen,
Head of the Department of the Historical Geography
and Demography of Azerbaijan of the Institute of History of ANAS,
Doctor of Historical Sciences, Professor*

Ulviyya Hajiyeva
*Leading Research Fellow of the Ethnoarchaeology Department
of the Institute of Archaeology, Ethnography and Anthropology of ANAS,
PhD in History*

Person in-charge: **Ravan Hasanov**
Executive Director of Baku International Multiculturalism Center

Editor: **Tahir Kazimli,**
*Associate of the Analytics Department
of Baku International Multiculturalism Center*

This second issue of “Ethnocultural Heritage of Caucasian Albania” is dedicated to the Great Victory of Azerbaijan in the Patriotic War of 2020 for the liberation of Karabakh after almost 30 years of occupation. It is a collection of papers on the important aspects of Albanian studies in archeology, anthropology, history, source studies, ethnology, architecture and art. This issue will be of interest both for researchers and for the public and everyone interested in various aspects of the history and culture of Caucasian Albania (4th century BC– early 8th century AD) and the Albanian ethnocultural heritage in general.

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**DEDICATED TO
THE GREAT VICTORY OF AZERBAIJAN IN THE PATRIOTIC WAR OF 2020
FOR THE LIBERATION OF KARABAKH FROM OCCUPATION,
THE GREAT VALOR OF SUPREME COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE ARMED FORCES
OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN, PRESIDENT ILHAM ALIYEV,
THE VICTORIOUS AZERBAIJANI ARMY, THE ETERNAL MEMORY OF THE MARTYRS,
THE PATRIOTISM OF THE AZERBAIJANIS OF THE WORLD
AND ALL ETHNIC GROUPS IN THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN**

KARABAKH IS AZERBAIJAN!



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FOREWORD

The Republic of Azerbaijan is the direct historical successor and custodian of the richest Albanian ethnocultural heritage, antique and early medieval culture of Caucasian Albania (4th century BC – early 8th century AD) and all historical and cult heritage created on its territory in the subsequent centuries by the ethnic groups living here.

The multi-ethnic and the multi-confessional nature of this region of the South Caucasus, the centuries-old co-existence in the same territory, the use of the Albanian and then the Azerbaijani language as a means of interethnic communication gave rise to the ages-old traditions of tolerance. These traditions laid a solid foundation for modern multiculturalism in Azerbaijan, creating conditions for the prosperity of all ethnic and sub-ethnic groups, reflecting the colorfulness and richness of the ethnic landscape of this region.

As is known, Caucasian-speaking (the Caucasian Albanian confederation of 26 tribes – Albanians, Udi (Uti, Udins), Gelae, Legae, Gargareans, Silvs, Chilbs, Lpins, etc.), Turkic (Huns, Sabirs, Barsils, Saks) and Iranian-speaking (Talayi (Talışes), Tats, Kurds) ethnic groups, as well as Jews (ancestors of Mountain Jews), whose descendants are now citizens of the Republic of Azerbaijan, have lived in Albania for centuries.

It should be noted that the Universal Church consists of separate Local Churches, one of which was the Albanian Apostolic Autocephalous Church (4th–early 19th centuries), associated with the Jerusalem Church by its confessional origins. Local Churches, in turn, include cathedral churches, dioceses that combine parish churches and monasteries. This Church structure took shape as early as the first centuries of its history, and since then it has remained fundamentally unchanged.

In the 4th–7th centuries, during the reign of Albanian kings Arsacids and the great Mihranid princes, civil and early Albanian religious architecture was created, both in Albania itself and in Jerusalem.

According to the author of “The History of the Albanians” Movses Kaghankatvatsi, the

administrative structure of the Albanian Church was as follows: the Archdiocese of Partaw, the dioceses of the autonomous regions of Lpinia and Chola/Chora (region of the Maskuts), which were administered by Archbishop of Partaw, the Catholicos of Albania; the dioceses of Gabala, Bakhalat and Bekh/Yekhni-Bekh, Shaki, Paytakaran and Balasakan, Amaras and Gaband, Gardman, Utik, Mets Kuenk, Mets Iran, Gashua (Hosha/Yushi), Tsri (Chilbka), Yeut; as well as the Hunnic diocese and the Syunik Metropolitanate which in the second half of the 6th century were under the de-facto jurisdiction of the Albanian Church, receiving ordination and holy myrrh from the Albanian Catholicos. This structure was maintained until the fall of the Albanian statehood in the early 8th century due to the Arab conquest, which brought with it the spread of Islam.

Islam was adopted by the main multi-ethnic population of Albania and by the 12th century had become the ideological basis for the ethno-linguistic and cultural-ideological consolidation of Caucasian-speaking Albanians, Turkic and Iranian-speaking ethnic strata into a single Azerbaijani people, which created the richest Muslim ethno-cultural heritage.

Part of the descendants of the above ethnic groups – Khinalugs, Lezgins, Budughes, Kryts, Udins, Tsakhurs, Rutuls, Khapyts, Ingiloys, Tats, Talishes, Kurds and others have, over the centuries, preserved their identity, self-designation, ethnic traditions and cultural identity, acquiring a double identity: a national (Azerbaijani) one and a narrower ethnic one.

By adopting Islam, almost all of these ethnic groups, with the exception of part of the Albanians, mainly the Udins, became Muslims and now adhere to this religion, living in Azerbaijan.

Over the centuries, the descendants of Albanian princely clans created a number of independent feudal principdoms in the 9th–11th centuries in Arran, the Syunik kingdom in the 9th–12th centuries, the Artsakh–Khachen principdom-kingdom in the 12th–15th centuries, melikdoms in the

15th–18th centuries as part of the feudal states of the Sajids (9th–10th centuries), Salarids (10th century), Shaddadids (11th–12th centuries), Atabek-Ildegizids (12th–13th centuries) Ilkhanate, Jalayirids (13th–15th centuries), Qara Qoyunlu, Aq Qoyunlu (15th century), Karabakh–Ganja beglarbegdom as part of the Safavid state (16th–18th centuries), and the Garabakh khanate.

Albanian Christians living on the right bank of the Kura had been an integral part of the flock of the Albanian Apostolic Autocephalous Church until the beginning of the 19th century and were the builders of the Albanian ethno-cultural heritage of this period, including both written historical and literary works and the construction of palaces, fortresses, monasteries, churches and chapels in the 11th–13th centuries and partially in the 17th–18th centuries.

In the 13th century, Albanian prince Hasan Jalal (1215–1261) of the Mihranid dynasty built the Gandzasar monastery in the name of St. John the Baptist in 1216–1238. It was consecrated in 1240 by Albanian patriarch Nerses III (1235–1262), as evidenced by the epigraph of this temple. The Albanian Catholicosate got the name of Gandzasar Catholicosate, as it was this monastery that served as its center until the beginning of the 19th century.

Documents of the 18th century – “Brief Register of the Erivan Province” (İrəvan əyalətinin icmal dəftəri), “Brief Register of Nakhichevan Sanjak” (Naxçıvan sancağının müfəssəl dəftəri), “Detailed Register of Ganja–Karabakh Province” (Gəncə-Qarabağ əyalətinin müfəssəl dəftəri), as well as the “Description of the Karabagh Province” (compiled in 1823 by actual state councilor Mogilyov and Colonel Ermolov the 2nd by the order of the Chief Governor in Georgia Colonel Ermolov,) prove that the main population of the Karabakh, Erivan and Nakhichevan khanates were Azerbaijanis.

In the early 19th century, the South Caucasus was conquered by tsarism, which significantly changed the ethno-political map of this region, massively resettling Armenians from Persia and Turkey to the historical Azerbaijani lands of the above khanates in accordance with the Treaty of Turkmenchay (1828) and the Treaty of Adrianople (1829). As noted above, the Albanian Apostolic Autocephalous Church had carried out its independent confessional activities in Karabakh

until 1836, uniting the Albanian Christian flock surrounded by an Azerbaijani Muslim community, which showed tolerance towards them for centuries. This is evidenced by information from a written source of the 19th century that in Karabakh, “back in 1828, according to eyewitnesses, monasteries were inhabited and flourishing, but after the termination of the Albanian Catholicosate, that is, after 1828.... most of them began to gradually deteriorate”. The physical and confessional destruction of the Albanian cult heritage occurred as a result of the re-subordination of its dioceses to Etchmiadzin by decree of Nicholas I in 1836. By the end of the 19th century, many Albanian civil and religious buildings had been destroyed; service in monasteries, which were the centers of the bishoprics of the Albanian (Gandzasar) Catholicosate, was not conducted, libraries and archives disappeared, and the Albanian Christian flock was scattered, having undergone confessional transformation and de-ethnicization. In the early 20th century, Etchmiadzin got permission from the tsarist government to destroy the archives, which officially confirmed their disappearance during the 19th century.

Due to the geopolitical changes in the early 20th century, Armenians and Etchmiadzin gained statehood on the historical Azerbaijani lands, which they had never historically possessed in the South Caucasus, in the form of the Armenian SSR and an autonomous region in Karabakh, which was part of the Azerbaijan SSR within the USSR.

This is the reason why throughout the 20th century Azerbaijani scientists did not have the opportunity to perform scientific research in the territory of Karabakh, which allowed the Armenians to transform, i.e. gregorianize the preserved Albanian cult heritage. Armenology has been established in the historical science, aimed at illegal and falsified justification of the claim that the right bank of the Kura on the territory of Azerbaijan belongs to the history and culture of Armenians, in order to annex this territory to Armenia in the future.

Albanian studies, as an integral part of Azerbaijani historical science, began to develop in the 60s of the 20th century with the emergence of such national scientists as Z.M.Bunyatov, F.Mammadova, Voroshil Ghukasyan, Z.I.Yampolsky, S.M. Kaziyeu, D.Agayev, G.Mammadova, K.Aliyev, T.Mammadov,

G.Goshgarli, T.Aliyev, who, with their fundamental works, proved all the iniquity and unscientific nature of the Armenian concepts regarding the historical Azerbaijani lands.

The new geopolitical conditions associated with the collapse of the USSR at the end of the 20th century allowed the Armenian armed forces to occupy Karabakh for almost 30 years until the fall of 2020.

Led by the **President of Azerbaijan and the Valiant Supreme Commander-in Chief of the Armed Forces, the Great Commander-Liberator Ilham Aliyev, the victorious Azerbaijani army** supported by all ethnic groups and confessions of Our multi-ethnic and multi-faith Country, as well as the Azerbaijani diaspora in Europe and the United States, in a spirit of the highest patriotism, united like an iron fist to liberate within 44 days (September 27–November 10) the following districts: Jabrayil district along with the city of Jabrayil (04.10.2020), Fuzuli district along with the city of Fuzuli (17.10.2020), Zangilan district along with the city of Zangilan (20.10.2020), Qubadli district along with the city of Qubadli (25.10.2020), a number of villages of Khojaly and Khojavend districts, Hadrut (09.10.2020) and the crown jewel of Karabakh, the city of Shusha (08.11.2020).

As a result of these victories, a trilateral statement was signed between Azerbaijan, Russia and Armenia on **November 10, 2020**, with the following regions being returned to Azerbaijan: Aghdam district along with the city of Aghdam (20.11.2020), Kalbajar district along with the city of Kalbajar (25.11.2020), Lachin district along with the city of Lachin (01.12.2020); as well as de jure Khojavend, Khojaly, Tartar and Khankendi districts (10.11.2020).

Azerbaijan owes the Great Victory in the Patriotic War of 2020 to the Valiant Warriors of the Country who represented all its ethnic groups and confessions. The heroism of the shahids will remain in the eternal memory of the Azerbaijani people and constitutes a glorious page in the history of Azerbaijan. Their highest patriotism once again proved the deepest value of the ideology of multiculturalism in Our country.

In the entire liberated territory of Karabakh, first of all in Shusha and Aghdam, the adhan was called once again and the Udiins reunited with their

spiritual Christian roots in the Albanian monasteries of Khudavank/Dadivank of the Kalbajar district and Agoglan of the Lachin district and the Church of St.John in the village of Tug, Khojavend region. And again, as it once was in Albania according to Kaghankatvatsi, “the ground will rumble from a prayer voice in different languages... chanting blessed psalms, praising God” throughout Azerbaijan when in Muslim mosques, Pirs (sacred places), Udi and Orthodox churches, and synagogues, all citizens of our country say prayers for the Great Victory of Azerbaijan and the prosperity of this ancient land.

Citing the words of the National Leader of the World’s Azerbaijanis Heydar Aliyev, we can say that “Azerbaijan is walking tall” towards its cherished dream – to revive the ancient land of our ancestors, bow to their graves, rebuild our shrines (Muslim mosques, Pirs and Albanian temples), revive the spiritual values that have been taken away and restore the natural beauty of this amazingly beautiful land.

Azerbaijan’s capital of culture, the crown jewel of Karabakh, Shusha, on **May 12–13, 2021** hosted the “Khari bulbul” International Music festival organized by Heydar Aliyev Foundation and dedicated to the memory of the shahids. The festival was attended by the President of Azerbaijan and Supreme Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces Ilham Aliyev, the First Vice-President and First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva, their daughters Leyla and Arzu Aliyeva, and famous cultural and public figures of Azerbaijan. After almost 30 years, the Azerbaijani mugham “Bayati-Shiraz” sounded once again on Jidir plain and in the Karabakh mountains. At the festival, famous musicians and dancers belonging to various ethnic groups currently living in our country staged performances glorifying Azerbaijan. Between the performances, videos that had been filmed in Shusha, featuring legendary Azerbaijani singers such as Bulbul, Seyid Shushinski, Khan Shushinsky, Rashid Behbudov and Shovkat Alakbarova were presented. Besides, classical musical compositions of Azerbaijani composers were performed, including the overture from opera “Koroghly” by Uzeyir Hajibeyov and mugam “Karabakh Shikastasi”. The festival program included the demonstration of works of Azerbaijani and foreign artists. The “Eternal Signatures” collection published by the Heydar Aliyev Foundation

was presented which included musical notations of works by outstanding Azerbaijani composers.

The “Khari bulbul” festival ended with videos showing the National Leader of the World Azerbaijanis Heydar Aliyev to say the following about the then occupied lands: *“I wish that we go to Shusha together with you. Believe me we will! Shusha is the eye of Azerbaijan and a source of pride for every Azerbaijani. Shusha is a symbol of our culture and history. Shusha is precious to everyone. But besides Shusha, we also cherish the Lachin mountains. We can never live without Lachin. The beautiful cities of Agdam, Fizuli, Jabrayil, Zangilan, Qubadli, the springs of Kalbajar, Istisu of Kalbajar. We cannot live without them, we cannot imagine it”* and President of Azerbaijan and Victorious Supreme Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces Ilham Aliyev to address the people on the day of the liberation of Shusha by saying: *“I am a happy person because I have fulfilled my father’s behest. We have liberated Shusha! This is a great Victory! Dear Shusha, you are free! Dear Shusha, we are back! Dear Shusha, we will revive you! Shusha is ours! Karabakh is ours! Karabakh is Azerbaijan!”*

On May 26, 2021, Baku International Multiculturalism Center, the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Azerbaijan, State Committee on Religious Associations of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Institute of History of ANAS and Azerbaijan University of Architecture and Construction held a joint International Scientific Conference “Caucasian Albania: History, Religion and Architecture”. The Conference was attended by 26 scientists, of which 11 were from 8 foreign countries: Germany (Jost Gippert), Norway (Bjorn Agnar Wegge), Georgia (Roman Lolua), France (Gilles Authier), Italy (Paolo Zammattéo, Abbot Alexy (Nikonorov), Russia (Richard Danakari, Artyom Kuranov, Sarkhan Bashirov), Lithuania (Rasa Chepaitine), Turkey (Salib Ozmen).

Studying the most crucial problems of Albanian studies in history, archeology, anthropology, ethnology, linguistics, architecture and art, the preservation and protection of the Albanian ethnocultural heritage is one of the important directions of the policy of multiculturalism in the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Academician Kamal Abdullayev

INTRODUCTION

Mammadova Farida

*Associate Member of Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences (ANAS),
Member of Azerbaijan National Academy of Creativity,
Honored Scientist of Azerbaijan, Laureate of the State Award of the Republic,
Holder of the Orders of Glory and the Golden Pen, Head of the Department
of the Historical Geography and Demography of Azerbaijan
of the Institute of History (ANAS), Doctor of Historical Sciences, Professor*

PROMINENT ALBANIAN FIGURES IN THE HISTORY OF AZERBAIJAN

History is not linear and predetermined, and in general, social development occurs according to its own laws that are beyond the will of any person. However, a person can significantly influence the course of history, and hence historical events can have many alternative scenarios. Each personality is accountable to history and society for their actions and in one way or another impacts the society as a whole. Due to the fact that society involves interaction of all people, each person can influence historical facts even by the smallest actions. In this regard, the role of an individual is manifested in specific historical events, phenomena, and processes, and it must be evaluated in accordance with specific historical facts [Гущин, 2013, с.233-237].

Over the centuries, in Azerbaijani history, there was an entire galaxy of prominent personalities who played an important role in politics, culture, and science. The Albanian ethnocultural heritage is a Christian page in the history of our country and a part of the richest Azerbaijani ethnocultural heritage.

As is known, Albania (4th century BC – early 8th century AD) is the first ancient state on the territory of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Over the 1,000-year history of the country, its borders stretched from Derbent in the north to the Aras in the south and from the Caspian Sea in the east to the borders of Georgia (Iberia) in the west (to the Hnarakert fortress, to the upper reaches of the Iori and Alazani rivers, to the Kura-Khrami interfluvial area) [Мамедова, 1986, с.89, 121, 127-139, 143, 150-151; Мамедова, 2005, с.247, 273].

The rulers of the country from the local Aranshakhid dynasty and then from Persian Arsacids and Mihranids pursued a pro-Albanian policy aimed at preserving the independence of Albania and its prosperity under very complicated geopolitical conditions until the fall of the Albanian statehood at the beginning of the 8th century. Among these rulers, a number of prominent figures stand out, whose political activities have played a particular important role in the history of Albania. Individual representatives of these clans made attempts to revive the Albanian kingdom in the local territories of Karabakh and Syunik (Zangezur) during the 9th–18th centuries. Preserving the independence of the Albanian Apostolic Autocephalous Church and Albanian spiritual values in the 4th–early 19th centuries was the aim of the confessional activity of the Albanian Patriarchs Catholicoi, some of which should be mentioned.

Over the centuries, the intellectual creative Albanian elite created a number of historical chronicles, hagiographic literature and legal works, which, despite the wrongful Armenian editing and distortion of the texts, have preserved valuable information about the Albanian ethnocultural heritage of Azerbaijan, its history, jurisprudence, religion, architecture.

As is known, the policy of the Persian (Parthian) Arsacids in relation to the subordinate Caucasian countries was unstable, the degree of dependence of each kingdom differed at various times. In the 2nd–1st centuries BC, to control the subordinate

countries, the Arsacids preserved the power of local dynasties. Kaghankatvatsi reports that “the head of all of them at the behest of Valarshak was someone from the Sisakan clan from the descendants of Japheth (Aran), who inherited the fields and mountains of Albania from the Eraskh river to the Hnarakert fortress... From among the brave and famous descendants of the same Aran, they say, the Parthian Valarshak appointed a governor over the country ...From his children, they say, descended the peoples of the Utik, Gardman, Tsovdia and Gargarean principalities” [Каланкат., I, 4, c.5]. So, Aran who hailed from the Albanian region of Sisak (Sisakan-Syunik), became the founder of the Aranshakhid dynasty.

As the separatism of the vassal kingdoms grew, the government of Arsacid Persia eliminated local dynasties and enthroned the Arsacid family members. This is how the younger Arsacids appeared in Albania, Persis, Elymais, Atropatene, Hyrcania, India, Armenia, Georgia and Makhelonia in the 1st century.

The main sources of information about the Albanian Arsacids are Movses Kaghankatvatsi, Faustus of Byzantium, Yeghishe, Khorenatsi, Agafangel, “Lives of the Saints” (hagiographic work), “Jaryntir”¹, Kirakos Gandzaketsi, Mkhitar of Ayrivank. Kaghankatvatsi kept a list of 10 Albanian kings of the Arsacid dynasty: “The number of days from Aran to the brave Vachagan, who descended from the great Arsacid family, is unknown. Here are the names of the kings who ruled Albania in due order: Vachagan the Brave (I), Vache (I), Urnayr, Vachagan (II), Mirkhavan, Satoy, Asay, Aswagen, Vache (II), after him Vachagan the Pious (III)” [Каланкат., I, 15, c.31].

Considering the strategic importance of Albania (Caucasian passes provided protection from nomads), its natural resources and trade routes, the kings of Persia preserved the statehood of Albania from the 1st to the 6th centuries. However, the Albanian Arsacids, despite their Persian origin and kinship with the kings of Iran, have always strived to be independent rulers. Albania was a centralized feudal state. The king headed the legislative and advisory body of secular and religious power and was the commander-in-chief of all the military forces of the country. Therefore, the Albanian state during

the reign of the Albanian Arsacids continued the traditions of ancient Albania and was a sovereign state.

The first Arsacid king in Albania was Vachagan I the Brave, who managed to unite all regions of Albania and create a united centralized kingdom [Каланкат., I, 6, c.6], and this is the historical significance of his reign. The capital of the Albanian state until the 5th century was Kabala (Kabalaka/Gabala).

Albanian king Urnayr [Каланкат., I, 8-10, 13, c.8-11, 23] was a contemporary of Persian king Shapur II the Long-living (309–379), to whose sister he was married, Byzantine emperor Constantine the Great (337–361) and Armenian kings Trdat III (287–330), Tiran (338–345), Arshak (345–367), and Pap (370–374). Urnayr is first mentioned in 313/4 in connection with the adoption of Christianity [Каланкат., I, 9, c.9], and the last reference to him dates back to 371 in connection with the battle of Dzirav [Бузандаци, V, 4; Каланкат., I, 13, c.23].

The Grecophile period of preaching Christianity in Albania was associated with the name of Gregory the Illuminator and Albanian king Urnayr, when Christianity became the state religion in 313/4 [Каланкат., I, 9, 14, c.9, 23]. Ordained as the chief priest (kahanayapet) in Caesarea, Gregory the Illuminator (ethnically Parthian, like Urnayr), apart from Armenia, “enlightened Iberia and Albania. Having arrived in Gaband (Albania), he taught the people to keep the commandments of the Son of God and laid the foundation of the church in Amaras, appointed workers and caretakers to complete the construction” [Каланкат., I, 14, c.26]. Christianity was spread in Albania earlier than in Armenia, which is evidenced by a number of texts of an Albanian historian: “In the year 43 according to Greek reckoning, the Armenians were enlightened, 270 years after the enlightenment of the Albanians...”; a letter of Armenian Catholicos Abraham to the Albanians reads: “The Albanian throne, which preceded ours (Armenian), was previously in peace with us (Armenians)” [Каланкат., II, 47, c.216]; “The Blessed Elishe, having begun apostolic work in the remote areas of the country, enlightened not all the areas, but only the northern part of our East (Albania), and he himself, having made a good struggle for his people, got weary. But at the time when the Lord

¹ *Jaryntirs are collections of speeches of clergy, martyrological and other works, different in volume and content. Jaryntirs are to ensure dogmatic education of community members.*

visited the human race, illuminated the entire west through the great emperor Constantine ...converted to faith the East (Albania) which learned about the salutary appearance of the true sun a little later. ***The Albanians were enlightened for the second time and more profoundly by Urnayr. All these miracles happened at the same time through God*** [Каланкат., I, 9, с.9-10].

In the light of the above, the prevailing opinion that the first Christian preachers were sent to Albania from Armenia seems untenable.

The internal policy of Urnayr is characterized by the struggle against paganism, the allotment of lands to the Church, appointments, and giving the first-ever tribute, i.e. tithe, to the Church [Каланкат., I, 11, с.15]. However, under Urnayr, Christianity did not become a widespread single religion. Accepted by the king, court, nobility and part of the population of Albania, it became the ideological basis of the emerging feudal culture. The ancient pagan beliefs continued to exist, including cults based on worshipping natural forces, Tengrianism, the dogmas of Manichaeism, Mazdeism, Zoroastrianism, and various sects. As for Urnayr's foreign policy, it is known that Albania, as a vassal and ally of Shapur II, was drawn into the Persian-Roman wars. Thus, in the battle of Amida in 359 between the Romans and Persians, Albanian king Urnayr stood with Persian king Shapur II (Аммиан Марцелин, кн.XVIII, гл.6). Kaghankatvatsi calls him "a valiant man who inherited a glorious name in great wars, hoisting the banner of victory inside Armenia" [Каланкат., I, 9, с.10]. But what was exactly the Albanian author has in mind remains unknown. King Urnayr also helped Shapur II in the battle on the Dzirav field in 371 against the Roman and Armenian troops (Бузандаци, V, 4). In this battle, Urnayr was wounded by Mushegh Mamikonian [Каланкат., I, 13, с.23; Бузандаци, V, 4]. This is all that is known about him.

Summing up, it should be noted that Albanian king Urnayr played an important role in the history of the country. Using the religion of monotheism and having declared Christianity the official religion of Albania, he made an important step to unite the multiethnic and multi-faith population of Albania and oppose the Zoroastrianism and Mazdeism of Persia.

This ideology was supported by both the Albanian kings, Arsacids, and later by their followers, the grand princes Mihranids, who tried to eradicate

polytheism through establishing a single religion. By the end of the 4th century, the necessary church hierarchy had already formed in Albania, with certain inherent subordination. This allowed the Albanian clergy to ordain the head of the Albanian Church independently. Kaghankatvatsi wrote: "Regarding the ordination of our [Albanian] Catholicos, the first [Albanian Catholicos] received [ordination] from Jerusalem – before St.Grigroris. And then to this day they receive [ordination] from our bishops" [Каланкат., III, 8, рук. С-59].

Christianization of Albania entailed the formation of writing in the 4th century and literature in Albanian, into which the Bible and other theological sources were translated from Syriac and Greek. This is evidenced by the Georgian-Albanian rescript (M/8т-13, M/5ш-50) found in 1996 in the monastery of St.Catherine on Mount Sinai by Associate Member of Georgian National Academy of Sciences Z.N.Aleksidze. Only a nation who has the entire text of the Bible in their own language can create a lectionary. This lectionary was not translated from any language, but was compiled from the books of the Bible in Albanian and presented on the basis of the now lost Greek lectionary [Алексидзе, 2002, 15-26].

This testifies to the inconsistency of the Armenian tradition, according to which the Albanian alphabet was allegedly invented by Mesrop Mashtots in the 5th century. In fact, he did not invent the Armenian alphabet either, but simply borrowed it from the Ethiopians [Ольдерогге, 1975, с.208].

The historical value of the reign of Albanian king **Aswagan (Arsvaghen)** lies in the fact that during this period, **a new Albanian script was created** by improving the old one. Records on this have been preserved by Kaghankatvatsi and Armenian authors of the 5th–8th centuries Koriun and Movses Khorenatsi (Moses Chorenensis). Of particular interest is the way Arsvaghen organized the **education of Albanian children**. He "ordered to teach writing to many children from the regions and districts of the country, to send them in groups to schools, to appropriate and convenient places and to assign them "food allowance" [Тревер, 1959, с.308-309].

In 444, **Vache II**, the son of Arsvaghen and sister of Persian king Yazdegerd II (438–457), became the Albanian king. In 428, The Sassanids abolished the

royal power in Armenia, turning it into a viceroyalty. In this period, Albania was a vassal country that retained royal power and the privileges of secular feudal lords and clergy. The separatism of the Albanian kings worried Yazdegerd II, who mobilized the military forces of Albania, Georgia and Armenia and transferred them to the northeastern borders of his state to fight the Huns (Yeghishe, I). Economic, political, cultural, and ideological oppression led to the anti-Persian movement of Albanians, Iberians and Armenians in 450–451, the reason for which was an attempt to implant Mazdeism by 700 Persian magicians, of which 300 arrived to convert the Albanians to Mazdeism (Yeghishe, II). Albanian king Vache II could not support the insurgents, for he was at the Persian court of Yazdegerd II as a hostage, who himself was forced to accept Mazdeism (Yeghishe). The uprising in Albania was led by the country's Catholicos and Hazarapet [Каланкат., II, 2, с.85; Егншэ, III]. It was suppressed in 451, and Yazdegerd II did not make concessions. Taking advantage of the civil strife for power in Iran in 457 after the death of Yazdegerd II, king Vache II led the anti-Persian uprising (457–463) [Каланкат., I, 10, с.11; Егншэ, X]. Externally, the uprising resulted in Vache II's renunciation of Zoroastrianism adopted under pressure. In 459, Peroz (459–484) came to power in Iran. The plight of the peoples under his control was aggravated by a long-term drought, crop failure and wars that he waged with external enemies. Albanian rebels seized the Chola passes and, letting in the Maskut troops, made an alliance with the eleven "kings" of the Greater Caucasus and with their help waged a –successful two-year military operation against the Sassanid troops invading Albania. The repeated attempts by the Persians to start negotiations with Vache II were in vain. Then Peroz, for a plenty of money, summoned the Onogur Huns who invaded Albania through the Alan Gate (Daryal) (Yeghishe, VII). Starting from 462, the Onogurs fought the Albanian king for a whole year [Каланкат., I, 10, с.11-12; Егншэ, VII]. The uprising in Albania was not suppressed before 463. By king Peroz's order, Vache II built the city of Perozabat (Partaw) [Каланкат., I, 5, с.6] which was the capital of Albania until the beginning of the 8th century. Transferring the capital from Kabala (Gabala) and the throne of the Albanian Patriarchate from Chola to Partaw is due to the frequent invasions to Albania by nomads (Khazars, Sabirs) who burnt churches and scriptures and

devastated cities and villages [Каланкат., II, 4, с.90]. The Sassanids once again strengthened their hold in Albania, and Vache II abdicated and got permission from Peroz to retain his father's inheritance – land plots with 1,000 houses. The letter from Bishop Gyt to king Vache II after his abdication is a kind of hymn in honor of Vache II [Каланкат., I, 10, с.12, II]. **So, the reign of Albanian king Vache II Arsacid was marked by the participation of Albania, led by the Albanian Catholicos, in the anti-Persian movement in 450–451, the anti-Persian uprising in Albania in 457–463 led by King Vache II himself, and the construction of a new capital of Albania, the city of Partaw (Barda).**

In 463, the royal power in Albania was abolished and the regime of the Persian governors (marzbans) was established. "For 30 years, from Vache to Vachagan the Pious, Albania remained without a king..." [Каланкат., I, 16, с.32]. The unsuccessful wars of Peroz, punitive expeditions against the Albanians, increasing tax oppression, infringement of the hereditary privileges of the nakharars and religious persecution were the reasons for the uprisings in Albania, Iberia and Armenia (481–484). Peroz was killed, and in 484 the Hephthalites broke into Persia. This forced the Persian troops to withdraw from Albania. The difficult political and economic situation in Persia forced it to conclude peace with the Caucasian peoples. According to the conditions of the Treaty of Nvarsak, the royal power of the Arsacids, freedom of religion and the privileges of the Albanian nobility were restored in Albania, and the principle of the hierarchy of the Nakharar clans was left inviolable. The Sassanids pledged not to impose Mazdeism, and Christians were not to convert fire worshipers to their faith. The amount of tribute that was to flow to Persia from Albania was reduced. The Albanians were exempted from supplying horsemen to the Persian cavalry.

In 487, "the inhabitants of Albania, once again uniting into one kingdom, chose from the children of the king the brave, the wise... Vachagan, the son of Yazdegerd, brother of Vache, the king of Albania, and enthroned him with the help of Walagash, the king of Persia" [Каланкат., I, 17, с.36]. Albanian king Vachagan III the Pious sought to achieve religious unity in the country, transformation of Christianity into a universal state religion. To this end, he strenuously persecuted fire worshipers, eradicated all pagan sects, opened schools, built "as many churches and monasteries as there are days in a year"

[Каланкат., III, 22, с.276], and restored church ranks. Explaining the reasons for the convocation of the Aguen Council of 488 by Vachagan III, Kaghankatvatsi reports that “there were disagreements between the laity and the clergy, between the azats and the commoners (ramiks); then the king wished to convene a council – a trial attended by many” [Каланкат., I, 26, с.65]. Vachagan III resorted to the Aguen canons to strengthen the state power, curb the self-willed feudal lords (the azats), equalize the clergy with the secular nobility, settle the relations of the taxable estate with the secular nobility and the clergy, achieve religious unity of all estates to preserve the political independence of the country, and fight against other religious influence. In Albania, Nestorianism and Manichaeism were preached, that were oppositional to Christianity. The preachers of these movements were the followers of Ibas from Syria (died in 457), an adherent of Nestor, and the followers of Syrian-manichean Bundos (5th century). According to the canons of the Aguen Council of 488, the Albanian clergy defended their rights before the secular nobility, the azats, and tried to have equal rights with them, while according to the canons of 705, the clergy took up arms against the azats, restricted their arbitrariness, and categorically forbade them to meddle in ecclesiastical affairs [Каланкат., I, 26, с.65-69, III, 11, с.248-252].

It should be noted once again that the kings Urnayr, Vache II, Vachagan III waged a fierce struggle against various pagan beliefs, trying to eradicate them. **The reign of Vachagan III the Pious was a political, cultural, and religious revival of Albania.**

Over the period of 510–629, the Sassanids established the power of Persian governors (marzbans) in Albania. In the middle of the 6th century, as a result of the military-administrative reform of Khosrow I Anushirvan (531–579), Albania was included in the Northern Adurbadagan Kust (frontier region), ruled by one Persian marzban.

After the death of Vachagan III the Pious, “this clan began to weaken and the princes from the Mihran clan, from the Sassanid tribe, arriving from Persia, established themselves in Albania” [Каланкат., III, 22, с.276]. Kaghankatvatsi provides the genealogy of the Albanian Mihranid clan: Mihr, Armayel, Vard, Vardan the Brave, Vard, Varazman, Varaz Grigor, Varaz Peroz, Javanshir, Jesuit Khosrow and Varazman [Каланкат., II, 17, с.135-137, III, 22, с.276-277]. The hopes of the Sassanids regarding

the Albanian Mihranids did not come true. The Mihranids, albeit being ethnically Persians, adopted Christianity and became akin to the local Albanian nobility, connected with the Albanian culture and language, and got Albanized. V.Bartold believed that in Albania, through the Mihranids, “the Albanian national dynasty is being restored, but of Persian origin”. The Albanian Mihranids continued the pro-Albanian policy. Although they had established themselves in Albania by 603, they did not become the “first grand princes” of Albania before 630.

Among the prominent Albanian personalities of the Mihranid period, we should note Albanian **Catholicos Viro** (536–630) [Каланкат., III, 23, с.281]. Taking advantage of the Iranian-Byzantine wars, the population of Albania headed by the Catholicos Viro revolted against the Sassanian oppression in 603–604. The uprising was suppressed with savagery by Khosrow II. Many of the Albanian nobility died, while Albanian Catholicos Viro survived thanks to the intercession of Shirin, the wife of Khosrow II. He was left for 25 years at the Persian court on the condition that till the end of his life “he would not return to his country, but remain in custody at the court. He [Khosrow II] did not take away from him the patriarch’s income nor did he deprive him of the dignity of Catholicos” [Каланкат., II, 14, с.117-118]. While being in custody, Albanian Catholicos Viro obtained an order from Khosrow II to grant the Albanian princes from the Mihranid dynasty the title of “the Lord of Gardman and the Prince of Albania” [Каланкат., II, 23]. Khosrow II convened the Persian Council, according to which in 614 he made monophysitism the official religion of all the subordinate Christians of Persia, the Caucasus and the conquered Byzantine eastern provinces, in opposition to the dyophysitism of Byzantium. In 624–628, Albania and Iberia become one of the main arenas of the Persian–Byzantine wars [Каланкат., II, 9-12, с.97-109]. In 629, Albania was again invaded by the Khazars led by Shat. The Persian marzban fled to Persia and the Albanian nobility led by Catholicos Viro, who had returned to Albania from Persian captivity, recognized the supreme power of the Khazars in 629–630 [Каланкат., II, 14, 16, 169, с.121-134]. The assassination of Yabghu Qaghan and the civil strife in Khazaria put an end to the Khazar rule in Albania and Albania gained independence. This was facilitated by the fact that Byzantium and Persia came out of the Persian-Byzantine wars of

628–629 exhausted. In 630, Catholicos Viro baptized Varaz Grigor the Mihranid (630–642), who converted from Monothelitism to Monophysitism and headed the country in the title of the Grand Prince of Albania obtained by Catholicos Viro from Persian shahinshah Khosrow II. Albania was devastated by the Khazars, famine and an epidemic reigned in the country, the victims of which were many including the Catholicos of Albania Viro (630).

The historical significance of Catholicos Viro's patriarchate is related to the fact that he led the anti-Persian uprising and after the defeat, being in Persian captivity at Khosrow II's court, he provided the title of "The Lord of Gardman and the Prince of Albania" for the Albanian Mihranids.

Albania remained under the influence of the Sassanian Persia. By this time, the Arabs were strengthening in the Middle East and advanced on Persia in 632 [Каланкат., II, 18, c.137]. In relation to the Caucasian countries, they pursued the Sassanid policy of alienating the Caucasian peoples from Byzantium, supporting monophysitism. Yazdegerd III demanded from the rulers of the countries under his control an additional army to fight the Arabs.

Kaghankatvatsi wrote that "Varaz Grigor ...turned thoughts to his second son, proud, majestic and splendid **Javanshir** ... Skillful in weapons, dexterous as an eagle, supportive to his father and successful in everything, Javanshir in his mind was preparing to help his father in the worldly life, match the greats and be in the company of kings" [Каланкат., II, 18, c.137]. In 636–642, Javanshir as the commander-in-chief of the Albanian troops, was part of the Persian army. In the Battle of al-Qadisiyyah (637), he distinguished himself with bravery duly appreciated by Yazdegerd III, "who gave him a banner and loud trumpets, two golden lances and two gilded shields which were always carried in front of him. He girded him with a golden belt studded with pearls and a sword with a golden grip, put bracelets on his arms and a beautiful crown on his head. He also gave him headbands studded with pearls and hung many strings of pearls around his neck" [Каланкат., II, 18, c.138-139]. In 640, during the siege of the Persian capital, Ctesiphon, by the Arabs, Javanshir, the head of the Albanian army (3 thousand), defended the city together with the Persians for six months. He also took part in the Battle of Nahavand in 642, when the Persian army was completely defeated. So, for seven years (635/6–642/3), Javanshir fought in the wars,

was severely wounded 11 times and returned to Albania. In 642/3, he became the first Grand Prince of Albania in the lifetime of Varaz Grigor. "The valiant Javanshir returned from the Persian wars with a glorious name and, by the order of the king, exalted the entire Albania with himself" [Каланкат., II, 19, c.141]. Immediately, Javanshir revolted against the Persian rulers. Together with Prince Varaz Grigor, he set out north of Partaw (Barda) to the left bank of the Kura River. At this moment, Persian troops invaded Albania, which, after the defeat of the Sassanid state by the Arabs, tried to gain a foothold in Albania. Javanshir cleared the Gardman and Kambisena regions from the Persians, where he made an alliance with the ruler of Iberia Atrnerseh. With the additional Georgian army, Javanshir went to the Utik region, drove the Persians off from there, cleared the capital Partaw from them, and freed his relatives (mother and brothers) captured by the Persians. New Persian troops sent from Atropatene were defeated by Javanshir in two battles near Sakasena. Javanshir concluded a truce with the Persians, "remembering about... the independence of the first eastern (Albanian) kings and comparing them with himself in the royal splendor, decided to never again subjugate his principality to anyone" [Каланкат., II, 19, c.141-143]. His struggle with the Persians for the independence of Albania ended with the invasion of the Arabs. In 642–645, they attacked the Central Caucasus from Atropatene and entered Albania, but failed to settle there (Sebeos, XLIX).

During this period, Armenia was practically a province of the Byzantine Empire. Therefore, the Armenians hoped for the arrival of the Arabs to achieve relative independence and unification of the Armenian provinces.

In the struggle against the Arabs, the Grand Prince Javanshir considered it necessary to become a vassal to Byzantium. In his letter to Byzantine emperor Constans II (641–668), Prince Javanshir wrote: "The all-powerful lord, the mighty and merciful sovereign of Greece Constans... Javanshir, asparapet and the prince of the Albanians with the humble country of the East bows to you, saluting with humility. May it please your Christ-loving seniority to agree to accept a remote people into new allegiance..." [Каланкат., II, 20, c.144-145]. The Byzantine emperor, in a response letter, expressed his consent and called Javanshir "The ruler of Gardman, prince of Albania, asparapet and proto-patrician" [Каланкат., II, 21,

c.145-146]. In addition to gifts, he sent to Javanshir pativs (honor, position) to bestow 1200 men with the titles of patricians, hypatoses, apohypatoses, and other Byzantine titles [Каланкат., II, 20, c.145]. In 660, Javanshir twice met with emperor Constans II (in Persia and in Vagharshapat), who received him with great honors: "Javanshir entered the imperial court **as a king**", "the emperor **honored him above all nobles**", "the emperor girded him with the belt of his brave grandfather Hercules and ancestor Nicetas", "the emperor gave him a piece of the Holy Cross, royal clothes", "two banners", "the emperor made his sons patricians". "The noblemen of Armenia and the military leader Amazasp, seeing that he received such heavenly gifts, greatly envied him... The emperor sent him, accompanied by the azats of Ararat, not as his slave, but **as a co-throne brother...**". "He [Constans] gave him [Javanshir] for hereditary possession all the villages and **borders of the Albanian kings** and entrusted him with reigning in the East **as a king**" [Каланкат., II, 22, c.147]. Prince Javanshir managed to preserve the statehood of Albania on the condition of vassal dependence on Byzantium. In 662, 664–665, when the Khazars attacked Albania again, Javanshir made an alliance with the Khazars and married the daughter of the Khazar qaghan [Каланкат., II, 23, 26, c.149-150, 153-154]. The Khazar raids, weakening of Byzantium, aggressive policy of the Arabs prompted Javanshir to submit to the caliph [Каланкат., II, 27, c.155-158]. Prince Javanshir visited Caliph Mu'awiya in Damascus in 667, thanks to which the population of Albania was spared from foreign invasions for three years. In 670, Javanshir visited Caliph Mu'awiyah again at his invitation. Javanshir's authority grew so much in the eyes of the Caliph that he was authorized to mediate in diplomatic negotiations between the Caliphate and Byzantium. Javanshir negotiated with such a skill that both sides were satisfied. Bestowing gifts on him, the caliph gave him the principality of Syunik and Atropatena. But Javanshir rejected this proposal and asked the caliph instead "to ease the tax burden imposed [by the Caliphate] on his country and the king of the south gladly agreed to this and ordered to reduce the tax burden by one third" [Каланкат., II, 28, c.159-163]. The Albanian author noted that the caliph received Javanshir "with such honors and splendor that he had not shown to any of the governors of the country". "He ordered to honor the eastern prince **as a crowned king**" [Каланкат., II, 27, 28].

The fact that prince Javanshir was treated with **royal dignity and royal honor** by both Byzantine emperor Constans II and caliph Mu'awiya shows that he was a prominent commander, wise politician, subtle diplomat and serious statesman of the mid 7th century, who managed to preserve the independence of Albania in the confrontation between the Persians, Arabs, Byzantines, and Khazars. He ordered the "History of the Albanians" to be written, which preserved poet Davtak's acrostic elegy on the death of the Grand Prince of Albania Javanshir [Каланкат., II, 35]. The elegy emphasizes the greatness of Javanshir's personality ("His fame spread throughout the earth, his name reached the end of the world"). Prince Javanshir was killed in a political conspiracy, according to some researchers in 683, and, according to the latest point of view, in 684. Kaghankatvatsi wrote: "He was respected and revered by the four conquering states and was no lower than these rulers" [Каланкат., II, 28]. "With autocracy and splendor, he ruled from the borders of Iberia to the Gates of the Huns and to the Aras River" [Каланкат., II, 21, c.146]. Therefore, the **time of his reign can be considered a period of political and cultural flourishing of Albania**.

In 705, Albanian prince Varaz Trdat fully accepted the allegiance of the Arabs [Каланкат., III, 12, c.254]. When in the 9th–13th centuries, the Azerbaijani states of Shirvanshahs, Sajids, Sallarids, Rawadids, Shaddadids and Atabeks were formed on the territory of former Albania, the re-established small Albanian kingdoms-principdoms were part of these Azerbaijani states.

In the 9th century, on the right bank of the Kura, a number of feudal estates were established headed by the descendants of Albanian princely families: Atrnerseh in Khachen, Ketritch in Gardman, Stepan Klia in Utik, Esayi Abu-Muse in Arran (Mil-Mugan, Baylakan to the Aras River), and Sahl ibn Sunbat in Shaki, Arran, Syunik, who after a long resistance were captured by Arab commander Bugha al-Kabir [Каланкат., III, 22, c.278; Бунятов, 1965, c.184-194]

In 886, Prince of "Small Syunik and Aghvank" **Grigor Hamama the Pious**, one of the sons of Khachen ruler Atrnerseh and the grandson of "the leader of the Syunik people" Sahl, "having become the Albanian king, **revived the destroyed kingdom of Albania**", "did great and generous benefits to those in need and the have-nots" [Каланкат., III, 21].

According to al-Mas'udi (Muruj, II, p. 86), Hamam (Hamam) was the **"Grand Prince of the East"** and **"the king of Albania"**, who united the Albanian kingdom deprived of a leader by the Arabs. Asoghik also calls Hamam "the king of Aghvank". Grigor Hamam's domain stretched from the eastern coast of the Goycha lake in the west to the proximity of the city of Partaw (Barda) in the east. He "extended his power beyond, including Kambichan–Shaki in his domain" [Каланкат., III, 22; Буниятов, 1965, с.189], i.e. the lands of the left bank of the Kura, which were part of the Albanian kingdom under the Albanian Arsacids and Mihranids (Barda) in the east.

In 910, one of Grigor Hamam's sons named **Atrnerseh II** declared himself king in Kambechani–Hereti. During his reign ("Kartlis Tskhovreba", I, 264), the Kingdom of Shaki was invaded in 915 by Abkhazian king Constantine III (893–922) and Kakhetian chorebishop Kvirike I (892–918), which resulted in the loss of some border towns. But Atrnerseh II regained these cities after a major invasion of the Sajids into Central Transcaucasia between 925–929. This way, the Shaki kingdom retained its territorial boundaries throughout the entire 10th century [Насибов, 1985, с.19; Мас'уди, «Мурудж»]. In the middle of the 10th century, according to Armenian catholicos Ananias Mokatsi, "Ishkhanik, the son of king Atrnersekh and the grandson of the blessed Hamam, the **pious sovereign of Aghvan**, sat on the throne" [Мамедова, 2005, с.396].

Artsakh and partly the province of Utik passed to another son of Grigor Hamam, **Sahak Sevada**, whose reign lasted till the 11th century [Каланкатуйский, III, 21, 22]. He subdued the Gardman region in the Utik province, Kust-i-Parnes in the Artsakh province, and Tsoroget (Shirak) in the Ararat province. The kings of the revived Albania in the 10th century came from the descendants of Sahak Sevada. These were his great-grandchildren, John Senekerim and Philipe [Каланкат., III, 22].

The Albanian author writes about **John Senekerim** that "the Most High chose with his right hand the king of the long-ceased kingdom renewed by God through him. The Persian king rewarded him with great honors and gave him the crown of his father and his horse. In the same year, Greek master David sent the royal crown and a magnificent purple mantle in honor and respect of the God-chosen man, who was anointed king by the right hand of the patriarch for the glory of Christ" [Каланкат., III, 22,

c.270]. The Albanian author emphasizes three times the legality of the royal dignity: "the Persian king... gave the crown", "the Greek master David sent him the royal crown", and finally, "was anointed king by the right hand of the patriarch". The "Persian king" should be understood as the Sallarids, who at that time ruled Azerbaijan (North and South), on whom, among other rulers, the rulers of the Artsakh–Syunik kingdom were in vassal dependence. **His reign till the end of the 10th century is considered to be the heyday of the Shaki kingdom** [Крымский, 1974, с. 593-594].

By the end of the 12th century, the Khachen kingdom-principality, which was considered part of ancient Albania, rose to prominence. As noted in Ajaib ad-Dunya, Khachen was a district within Arran and occupied the territory of Artsakh and Utik, with the center in the basin of the Khachen-Chai and the Tartar rivers [Мамедова, 2005, с.408]. The rise of the Artsakh-Khachen kingdom-principality is associated with prominent personality **Hasan Jalal**, the son of Lower Khachen ruler Vakhtang Tankik (Tonkik) and Horishah (the sister of Zakharia Spasalar and Ivane Atabek Dolgorukov-Argutinsky, famous brothers in the history of the Caucasus). He was also related to the rulers of Syunik through his wife Mamkan, who was a collateral descendant of the house of Syunik and ruler of this country Senekerim. The period when Hasan Jalal lived and worked is rich in historical events, which are reflected in the works of Albanian authors Kirakos Gandzaketsi, Vardan Aghvanetsi and Mkhitar Gosh. In Persian, Armenian and Georgian synchronous sources, as well as in epigraphic inscriptions, Hasan Jalal is endowed with high titles: "The Prince of princes", "The Kingly brilliant", "The Prince of the Khachen lands", "The Grand Prince of Khachen and Artsakh", "The King", "The Crown Wearer", "The King of Albania", "The Great Border-Keeper of Albania" [Мамедова, 2005, с.408-413]. In 1216–1238, the Gandzasar monastery was built in the name of St. John the Baptist. Its epigraph read as follows: "I, the humble servant of God, Jalal Dola, the son of Vakhtang, the grandson of the great Hasan, the authentic ruler of the high and great Artsakh land and the sovereign of multiple provinces; my father instructed me and my mother Khorisha to build this church on the grave of our fathers in Gandzasar, which we started to build in 665 (1216) ... This church was consecrated in 689 (1240) in the patriarchate of ter Nerses, the Catholicos of

Aghvank" [Бархударянц, с.154-156, 160, примеч. 403]. Prince Hasan Jalal generously endowed the monastery with arable land and silver church utensils listed in detail in the inscription.

In 1220, Khachen was attacked by Mongol troops. In 1227 (or later), during the campaign of Jalal ad-Din Khwarazmshah, his vizier Sharaf al-Mulk approached the Khachen fortress. Hasan Jalal managed to buy off by paying 10,000 dinars. Later, Khachen was again invaded by the Mongols. Hasan Jalal took shelter with the inhabitants of his region in the Khokhanaberd fortress. "The wise Jalal, seeing the attack of the infidels, hid his people in a fortress called Khokhanaberd in Persian. And when the Tatars (Mongols) came and, having besieged this fortress, were convinced that it was unconquerable, they offered Hasan friendship and peace". Hasan Jalal went to the Mongols with numerous gifts. They "gave him his country with some additional territories". He was charged with the duty of always taking part in their campaigns. This occurred between 1238 and 1240. Probably, this time should be associated with the marriage of Bora-nuin, the son of Charmagan, to Hasan Jalal's daughter Ruzukan. In 1243, Hasan Jalal with a detachment took part in the campaign of Bayju who took the place of Charmagan, against the Ruman sultan Ghiyath ad-Din Kaykhusraw III. By this time, Hasan Jalal had a certain influence with the Mongol commander-in-chief. It was thanks to Hasan Jalal's help that the ambassadors of Cilician king Hethum managed to introduce themselves to Bayju and Charmagan's wife Eltin-Khatun. The strong pressure by Arghun and Bugha through new tax rates in 1246/7 forced Hasan Jalal to seek the patronage of Sartak, the son of Batu Khan of the Golden Horde, whom he visited in 1251 and declared his obedience. Sartak led Hasan Jalal to his father Batu (at his headquarters on the shores of the Caspian Sea) who returned to him his hereditary possessions, Charaberd (Jraberd), Akan and Karkar, and declared him the ruler of a number of new lands. Hasan Jalal managed to secure privileges for Albanian Catholicos Nerses, providing his property with tax immunity. Noteworthy is the report of Kirakos Gandzaketsi: "...but they (the Mongols) did not act this way with other countries, wherever they arrived, they brought oppression" (Киракос, с.136). In 1255–1260, Hasan Jalal was forced to go again to the Great Khan Batu to Mongolia, Karakorum, because of the persecutions from Arghun. The Great

Khan again returned to him all his hereditary titles and "gave him a written guarantee of power". Hasan Jalal managed to maintain the independence of the Khachen principality for 10 years (1251–1261). Soon, upon return from the Mongolian camp, Hasan Jalal was suspected by Arghun of participating in the anti-Mongol uprising. "Put in irons and under a wooden yoke", he was sent to Qazvin for hard labor, but was killed on the way in 1261. His son Atabek was appointed the prince of Khachen and ruled until 1287.

Thus, in difficult political conditions, thanks to a wise and flexible policy, Hasan Jalal could preserve the independence of the Khachen kingdom-principality. For the sake of preserving the integrity of the Albanian Christian ethnos and the Albanian Apostolic Autocephalous Church, Hasan Jalal repeatedly traveled to the Mongolian camp, participated in their wars, remained for years in the Mongolian camp and, finally, became their victim.

The Albanian Catholicosate moved to the Gandzasar Cathedral and since then it came to be known as the Gandzasar Cathedral and became the religious center of the late Albanians until 1836. It is very important that Hasan Jalal himself called the Gandzasar Cathedral "the Albanian patronal cathedral". Among the representatives of the Albanian clergy, in addition to Viro, we should also note Catholicos Yesai Hasan Jalal and Sargis (Sergei) Hasan Jalal.

Albanian Catholicos **Yesai Hasan-Jalalyan** headed the Gandzasar patriarchal see in 1702–1728. He supported Karabakh and Zangezur meliks in their aspirations to gain independence, which were expressed in seeking help from Russian Tsar Peter I [Тер-Григорян, 1989, с.6]. Catholicos Yesai Hasan-Jalalyan led an anti-Persian uprising in Karabakh, which was defeated. His great merit is "A Brief History of the Albanian Land (1702–1722)" [Хасан-Джалалян Есаи, 1989], which contains valuable information about this period of the region's history. The name itself confirms the preservation of the Albanian identity in Karabakh in the 18th century.

The last Albanian Catholicos **Sargis (Sergei) Hasan Jalal** was ordained in Ganja in 1794 during a very difficult time of confessional confrontation between the Gandzasar Catholicosate and the self-proclaimed Catholicosate of the Yerits Mankants monastery, as well as the political confrontation between the Khan of Karabakh Ibrahim Khan and the

meliks of Gulistan, Jraberd and Dizak. Supporting the meliks in their desire to preserve their sovereignty, catholicos Sargis (Sergey) Hasan Jalal found himself in opposition to the khan of Karabakh and suffering a defeat, he was forced to move to Georgia with his flock in 1798. Here he was warmly welcomed by the Georgian king and appointed archbishop of the Haghpatek monastery. In 1812, Sargis (Sergey) Hasan Jalal returned to Gandzasar with his flock and headed the Albanian Church as the catholicos until his death in 1828 [Раффи].

This is a brief overview of the historical significance of the activities of a number of prominent Albanian rulers and catholicos.

Albania was prepared for the creation of its literature by socio-economic, confessional, and political conditions over the 5th–8th centuries. This was the time of the Albanian state with the ruling royal dynasty of Arsacids and the great Mihranid princes who replaced them, and the Albanian Apostolic Autocephalous Church. Kaghankatvatsi (I, 3) provides data given by Roman author Hippolytus, according to which the Albanians are mentioned in the list of peoples with a language and writing [Мамедова, 1986, с.42]. Armenian historian of the 8th century Ghevond, listing the languages into which the Bible was translated, mentioned Albanian in the 12th place. There is information about the Albanian language in the 17th–18th centuries in the manuscripts of 1669 and 1726, when the “Holy Fathers found in the East a manuscript entitled “On the History of the Holy and Divine Oil” in the Albanian language, and they also translated it into Old Armenian. This Old Armenian manuscript was found by A.D.Anasyan in Matenadaran [Еремян, 1958; Шанидзе, 1960, с.169; Алексидзе, 2003, с.36; Абуладзе, 1940, с.317-319; Ямпольский, 1957, с.149-156; Алиев, 1962, с.17; Бунятов, 1965, с.97].

In the formation of the Albanian historical and literary tradition at the turn of the 7th–8th centuries, an invaluable role was played by **Movses Kaghankatvatsi**. His “History of Albania”, which has come down to us in Old Armenian translated from Albanian, contains basic historical data about Albania of the 1st–10th centuries (about socio-economic, political and ecclesiastical/ideological history, the Albanian Apostolic Autocephalous Church, culture and historical geography), allows elucidating the matters of Azerbaijani ethnogenesis, the history of the Albanian, Turkic, and many other

ethnic groups living in the Caucasus and beyond. A.G.Shanidze wrote: “It is believed that the “History of Albania” attributed to Movses Kaghankatvatsi was translated from Albanian into Armenian, just like the historical chronicles “Kartlis Tskhovreba” titled “The History of Georgia” were translated from Georgian into Armenian [Шанидзе, 1960, с.169].

The name of the author of the “History of Albania” was first mentioned by Mkhitar Gosh (12th–13th centuries) in his unfinished work “Albanian Chronicle”: “...History written by Movses Daskhurantsi who made a full account of the Albanian dynasty” [Гош Мхитар, 1960, с.8]. Movses Daskhurantsi is also mentioned by Mkhitar Gosh’s student, vardapet Vanakan (the teacher of Kirakos Gandzaketsi). In the 13th century, Kirakos Gandzaketsi and Mkhitar Ayrivantsi are the first to name Movses Kaghankatvatsi as the author of the “History of Albania” [Гандзакеци Киракос, 1946, с.15]. It appears that the nickname of Kaghankatvatsi (“of Kaghankatuik”) is based on the context of the “History of Albania” itself, where it is said: “When the enemy became aware of what had happened, they pursued them and overtook a group of them at the foot of the mountain opposite the large village of Kaghankatuik, which is in the same province of Uti where I am also from” [Каланкат., II, 11, с.106]. C.Dowsett, based on the opinion of V.B.Hanning, believes that the nickname refers to the name of the monastery in Kaghankatuik, where Movses was a servant, and the nickname Daskhurantsi refers to the village of Daskhoren, where he was from. “This enables us to consider Kaghankatvatsi and Daskhurantsi as one and the same person”. And C.Dowsett prefers the nickname Daskhurantsi [Dowsett, 1958, p.476, XIX; Мамедова, 2005, с.32; Каланкат., I, 26, с.66]. According to N.Adonts, T.Ter-Grigoryan, K.V.Trever, Z.M.Buniyatov, V.Arakelyan, L.M.Melikset-Bekov, K.G.Aliyev, books I–II were – written by Movses Kaghankatvatsi and book III by Movses Daskhurantsi.

Therefore, it should be noted that in historiography it is generally accepted that Movses Kaghankatvatsi, who lived at the turn of the 7th–8th centuries, is the author of the “History of Albania”, and “Daskhurantsi” is either his nickname or the name of the author of the third part of the book. The village of Kaghankatuik was most likely located west of Partaw, being an important site on the Dwin-Partav road, presumably in the vicinity of

the village of Magavus. Books I–II date back to the early 8th century and the book III is attributed by researchers to the 10th century based on the fact that the last-mentioned event is the conquest of Partaw (Barda) by the Rus.

Studying the three Old Armenian, a Modern Armenian, English and Russian editions of “The History of Albania”, as well as engaging additional four manuscripts from St. Petersburg and the National Library of France, of which two belong to the Albanian edition in the context of discrepancy (J10 ИБАН S-59 and P4 220) and two to the Armenian edition [ЛО ИБАН B-56 and Pi 217 (Makler catalogue)] [Мамедова, 1982, с.38-39]. Studying the genealogy of the manuscript lists of this work enabled us to draw a genealogical tree of the source manuscripts, which is divided into two groups according to its discrepancy: 1) edited by the Armenian Church, 2) unedited [Каланкат., 1861; C.J.F.Dowsett, The History of the Caucasian Albanians by Movses Dasxuranci, 1961].

The textual analysis, the study of the style of writing and the chronological system of dating the events in the “History of Albania” show that the content of this work (which describes the history of Albania from ancient times to the beginning of the 8th century [the history of the Albanian ethnos, the rulers of the country and the Albanian Church], outlines the territorial boundaries of the country fixed on both banks of the Kura River three times in different periods, etc.), the manner of presentation, the author’s attitude to the events and individual historical figures (Catholicos Viro, Vachagan III, Javanshir, poet Davtak), the strictly developed chronological system, i.e. dating of events according to the reigns of the Albanian rulers, as well as the reigns of the Persian and Byzantine kings (dating with synchronization) leads to the sole conclusion that the “History of Albania” was written by an Albanian for the Albanian people [Мамедова, 1977; Мамедова, 1986, с.8-21; Мамедова, 2005, с.8-69, 669-670]. **Movses Kaghankatvatsi is that outstanding Albanian historiographer whose “History of Albania”, despite the wrongful Armenian editing, has preserved invaluable information about the Caucasus, Albania and Christianity of the 1st–10th centuries and has served as a reference book for many historians, archaeologists, source researchers, linguists, ethnologists and architects over the centuries up to the early 21st century,**

allowing them to recreate the true history of the Caucasus.

The research has shown that the period of prosperity of the Albanian written heritage is associated with the emergence of the Albanian local kingdoms-principalities in Syunik, Karabakh–Artsakh and Shaki–Kambisena. It is this period that saw an increase in the role of Ganja, a city which has produced such famous representatives of Albanian historiography as David Alavik (“Canonical Advice”, 12th century), Mkhitar Gosh (“The Albanian Chronicle”, “The Lawcode”, “The Life and Martyrdom of Khosrow of Gandzak”, 12th–13th centuries) [Gosh Mkhitar, 1960], Kirakos Gandzaketsi (“The History”, 13th century) [Гандзакеци Киракос, 1946], Vardan the Great Areveltsi/Aghvanetsi (Eastern/Albanian) (“General History”) [Вардан Великий, 1861; Vardan Arewelc’i, 1989], Gregory Patmich-Magakiya (“The History of the Mongols”), Sempad Sparapet (“The Lawcode”, 13th century) [Судебник Смба́та Спарапета (Гундста́бля), 1971; Смба́т Спарапета. Летопись, 1859, 1956, 1974], Stepannos of Syunik (“The History of the Sisakan Clan”, 13th century) [Степаннос Сюнийский, 1861], Hayton of Corycus (“Flower of the Histories of the East”). Their works described certain aspects of the Albanian society, its political and religious life of the 11th–13th centuries, the period of Seljuk and Mongol domination in the Caucasus and Western Asia, and also preserved valuable information about the history of Georgia, Armenia, Byzantium and Cilicia, the history of Christianity in general and the Albanian Apostolic Autocephalous Church in particular. Based on the information about the use of the Albanian script in the 14th century as reported by Cilicia-based historian Hayton of Corycus (Hethum the Historian) (from the Hetumid family hailing from Ganja) in his book “La Flor des estoires de la Terre d’Orient” (“Flower of the Histories of the East”) written in 1307 in Old French (which read that “...there were different alphabets – one was Armenian and the other was Albanian”) (I, гл. X) [Мамедова, 2005, с.103; Мирный, 1956, с.72-82], it can be suggested that the above works were written in the Albanian script and later translated into Armenian.

We should also note the work of Albanian Catholicos Yesai Hasan-Jalalyan “A Brief History of the Albanian Land (1702–1722)”, which was first published in 1839 in Shusha by Metropolitan Baghdasar Hasan-Jalal. Its second edition was

published in Jerusalem in 1868. This work was translated into French by the Member of the Imperial Academy of Sciences M. Brosse and published in St. Petersburg in 1876 [Хасан-Джалалян Есаи, 1989, с.6].

It is revealing that all of the authors mentioned, from the 8th to the 18th centuries, note the Albanian self-awareness, both in the text of the sources and in the very titles of their works.

Starting from the 13th century, the Armenians translated the literature created in the Albanian language before the 14th century into Old Armenian. Preservation of Albanian literature in the Old Armenian language was rather due to the geopolitical changes that involved the transformation of the Albanian ethnocultural heritage into Armenian, starting with the redefinition of the Albanian historical and literary tradition. After the abolition of the Albanian Apostolic Autocephalous Church in 1836 by Russian tsarist government and its subordination to Etchmiadzin, the Armenian clergy started publishing Albanian literature, having translated it into Armenian and edited with a deeply thought-out Armenian concept. But even edited, the Albanian written legacy allowed restoring the chronological sequence of the development of the Albanian historical and literary tradition.

A brief historical review of prominent Albanian personalities (rulers, catholicos and historiographers) shows that over the centuries they made an important contribution to the formation of centuries-old traditions of Azerbaijani statehood and tolerance through their military, political, diplomatic, and literary deeds, protecting the territorial integrity of the Motherland and devotedly serving its independence and prosperity.

At the end of the 20th century, when Azerbaijan gained independence, the centuries-old traditions of statehood were embodied in the political activities of the President of the Country and the National Leader of all Azerbaijanis in the world, **Heydar Aliyev** (1993–2003). Our country was gifted with

an outstanding ruler and a subtle diplomat who, in the most challenging geopolitical conditions, economic, military, and political crisis, defeat in the First Nagorno-Karabakh War and loss of 20% of the territory of Azerbaijan, managed to lay the strongest foundations for the military-political, socio-economic, cultural, and ideological development of Azerbaijan and create an Azerbaijani diaspora in the world [Мамедова, 2010, с.12].

President of Azerbaijan, Valiant Supreme Commander-in-Chief of the Azerbaijani Army, Liberator Commander, National hero, wise politician, subtle diplomat and prominent statesman **Ilham Aliyev** has demonstrated to the whole world the continuity of Azerbaijani traditions of statehood by his rule since 2003. The economic development of the country allowed to increase the military and political potential in Azerbaijan to a high level and create a highly professional Azerbaijani army. The national policy expressed in the ideas of multiculturalism and the highest patriotism united the multi-ethnic and multi-faith Azerbaijan into a single iron fist. The Karabakh problem that had been imposed on Azerbaijan by Armenian separatism and its political allies for almost 30 years, was solved with a lightning speed within 44 days during the Great Patriotic War (September 27 – November 10, 2020).

President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev, standing at the head of the victorious Azerbaijani Army and supported by all citizens of the multi-ethnic Azerbaijan, representatives of different faiths and the Azerbaijanis of the world who united around him like a single iron fist, liberated the ancient land of Karabakh from occupation and the entire region from Armenian fascism. The great Victory of the President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev is forever inscribed on the tablets of the history of Azerbaijan in golden letters, along with the eternal memory of the martyrs and gratitude to all the participants in the First and Second Karabakh Wars from our contemporaries and descendants.

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ARCHEOLOGY, ANTHROPOLOGY

Ragimova Maisa*Professor, Doctor of Historical Sciences of the Institute of Archaeology, Ethnography and Anthropology of ANAS*

THE ROLE OF ARCHAEOLOGY IN THE STUDY OF HISTORY AND CULTURE OF CAUCASIAN ALBANIA IN THE PERIOD OF ANTIQUITY

Researchers distinguish two periods in over a thousand-year history of Albania, one of the oldest state formations in the South Caucasus. The first ancient period covers a chronological span from the Hellenistic Period to Late Antiquity, inclusive (the 4th century BC– early 3rd century AD), and the second one, the Early Medieval Period lasts from the foundation of the Sasanian state until the Arab conquest which brought an end to independent political history of the Albanian state in the Caucasus (3rd – early 8th century). While the second period is sufficiently well covered in numerous Sasanian, Byzantine, Syrian, Arab, Armenian and Georgian sources [Тревер, 1959, с.7-24], the early ancient period of Albanian history does not have a wide source base. Here we are dealing with a fairly narrow range of antique sources, the information of which is often superficial, contradictory, and sometimes totally opposite.

The Albans, as one of the leading major ethnic groups of the South Caucasus, were first recorded in written sources in connection with the Battle of Gaugamela (331 BC). The Roman historian Flavius Arrian, who described this battle, notes the location of the Alban soldiers in the battle formation of the army of the Persian king Darius III [Арриан, 1993, кн.III, 11, 3]. Since that time, information about the Albans and the state created by them in the late 4th– early 3rd centuries BC, on the vast territory of the South Caucasus from the mountains of the Greater Caucasus to the Aras River, is found in works of some Greek and Roman authors.

The greatest attention to the Albanian state was paid by historian and geographer Strabo who lived at the turn of the two eras [Страбон, 1964, кн.XI, гл.IV, 1-8; Грацианская, 1988, с.6-175]. In his work “Geography”, he made extensive use of information about Albania from the works of unknown to us earlier Greek and Roman authors of the 4th–1st centuries BC. His informants include Patroclus (4th century BC), Eratosthenes (3rd

century BC), Metrodorus of Scepsis (2nd century BC), Posidonius (1st century BC) and Theophanes of Mytilene (1st century BC) who participated in Pompey’s campaign in the Caucasus, and other authors [Тревер, 1959, с.7-9; Алиев, 1992, с.21]. Due to the mechanical combination and generalization of the data of these authors of different times about the Caucasus in general and about Albania in particular, Strabo’s work contains a lot of inaccuracies, contradictions, and mutually exclusive messages. These messages are often shifted in time and space [Тревер, 1959, с.8-9; Алиев, 2003, с.25-26].

We find brief information about Albania, mainly related to the campaigns of the Romans and their policy towards the South Caucasus, in antique authors of the Roman period of our era. Thus, in Plutarch’s “Parallel Lives” and Dio Cassius’ “Roman History”, the campaign of the Roman warlord Gnaeus Pompeius in Albania and neighboring Iberia is described in detail [Плутарх, 1994, Помпей, 34: Дион Кассий Коккеиан, 1948, кн.XXXVI, гл.54, 3-5; кн.XXXVII, гл.3, 1-6; гл.4, 1-4]. Important information about Albania is available from the outstanding geographer and astronomer of antiquity, Claudius Ptolemy. He provides certain information about some cities of Albania, including its capital Qabala, and also reports on many rivers flowing through the territory of Albania, the mountain passes of the Greater Caucasus and the sea and land trade of the Albans [Птолемей, 1948, с.232-257]. Ptolemy indicates the geographical coordinates of all the geographical sites mentioned and this could be of great help in their localization, but his use of the inaccurate length of the earth’s circumference makes it impossible to localize the sites according to the coordinates provided [Томсон, 1953]. We find some information about the nature of Albania and the way of life and lifestyle of the Albans in the works by the outstanding Roman encyclopedic scientist Pliny the Elder (1st century AD) in his famous “Natural History” [Тревер, 1959, с.9-10; Алиев, 1992, с.21]. As Pliny

states himself, when describing Albania, he used the works of authors of previous epochs, including those who accompanied Alexander the Great in his eastern campaign [Алиев, 1992, с.21].

In other antique authors of the 1st–3rd centuries AD, such as Titus Livy, Tacitus, Pomponius Mela, Josephus Flavius, Gaius Suetonius Tranquillus, and others, information about Albania and the Albans is extremely concise and often duplicates and repeats the information of the above authors. Due to these factors, archaeological research should have played a decisive role in the reconstruction of the historical past of Caucasian Albania in the ancient period.

In general, the archaeological science in Azerbaijan started its way in the first half of the 20th century, and specifically the Albanian branch in Azerbaijani archeology was formed only in the second half of the last century. Prior to that, during the entire 19th century, the archaeological research in Azerbaijan was carried out sporadically by Russian and foreign archaeologists, and sometimes local officials who did not know the methods of scientific excavations. At the same time, only funerary monuments, mainly of the Bronze Age, were studied, and the resulting material was exported outside of Azerbaijan. Thus, in 1834, Swiss traveler Frederic Dubois de Montperreux excavated a burial ground on the territory of the modern Goygol district, and the artifacts found were exported to France. In 1862, French traveler Adolphe Bernier explored some ancient monuments in the Mugan steppe and also exported the materials found to France [Azərbaycan Milli Ensiklopediyası, 2007, s.652-653]. In the late 19th century, V.Belk, an employee of Siemens & K, Germany, that produced copper in the Gadabay district, excavated more than 300 stone cyst burials of the late Bronze and early Iron Age (late 2nd–early 1st millennia BC). All the identified archaeological and anthropological material was sent to Germany, where it remains up to the present day [Göyüşov, 1986, p.8]. In the same period, French archaeologist Jacques de Morgan excavated 230 graves of the late Bronze and early Iron Age in the Talysh Mountains. All the archaeological material was sent to France, where it is still kept in the Saint-Germain Museum [Yacones de Morqan, 1927, pp.263-283]. In the late 19th–early 20th centuries, by order of the Imperial Archaeological Commission of Russia, E.Rösler, G.Rosendorf and A.Ivanovsky studied numerous burial grounds of the late Bronze and early Iron Age

in Karabakh, in the valley of the Ganjachay River and in other western regions of Azerbaijan. The materials of these excavations were taken to St.Petersburg, Moscow, and scientific reports were published in the Reports of the Imperial Archaeological Commission [Гүсейнова 2011, с.154] and the News Collection of the Archaeological Commission, and Materials on the Archeology of the Caucasus [Ивановский, 1911, вып.VI, с.85-172; Ivanovsky, 1911, edition VI, pp.85-172].

As we can see, the monuments of the Albanian period in the 19th century were not purposefully studied, but, nevertheless, it was in this period that the first steps in the field of Albanian studies were made. In 1829, after the conclusion of the Turkmenchay Peace Treaty, the Imperial Archaeological Commission sent Alexander Yanovsky to Transcaucasia (South Caucasus) in order to identify ancient historical monuments. He, along with the survey of the region, carried out exploratory excavations in the area of the Albanian capital Qabala [Бабаев, 1990, с.17]. Based on this research, he published an article On Ancient Caucasian Albania in 1846, which actually became the first scientific paper in Albanian studies, which touched on the issues of borders, political structure, cities, analysis of sources, etc. [Яновский, 1846, с.97-203]. It should also be noted that before A.Yanovsky, in 1835, an article by Friedrich Kruse was published, which, according to K.V.Trever, was commissioned [Тревер, 1959, с.24]. This article notes the importance of studying the ancient history of Iberia, Albania, Colchis, and Armenia, especially in terms of restoring the ancient highway between the Caspian and Black Seas [Крызе, 1835, с.423-438].

In the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century, some questions related to the ancient history of Caucasian Albania are found in the works of Russian scientists I.Chopin, B.A.Dorn, V.V.Bartold, V.F.Minorsky, Ye.A.Krymsky, S.V.Yushkov and in European researchers G.Gipert, V.Tomashek, I.Marquardt, H.Hübschmann, etc. [Алиев, 1992, с.6-9],

A.A.Bakikhanov was the first Azerbaijani researcher to touch upon the Albanian theme. In his famous work “Gulustani-Iram”, exploring the history of Azerbaijan from ancient times to the Treaty of Gulistan (1813), using antique and oriental sources, toponymic data and some historical and architectural monuments, he also touched upon a number of

issues related to the historical geography of Albania, its tribes and their struggle with the Roman and other conquerors [Бакиханов, 1991].

It is not until the very end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century that archaeological studies of Albanian monuments began. Thus, in 1895, E.Rösler found in the Mil steppe in the area of Galatapa and Qarabulaq (now Aghjabadi and Fuzuli districts) burial grounds with jar burials [Халилов, 1985, с.12]. In 1903, G.O.Rosendorf studied 16 burials in mud tombs dated to the watershed of two eras, on the territory of the modern Goygol district. In 1905, the excavations at this burial ground were continued by V.A.Skinder, who examined 6 more graves of this type. In 1937, Y.I.Hummel studied 8 graves of this type, and, in 1938, 12 more burials of this burial ground [Гошгарлы, 2012, с.60-65]. In 1915, Ye.A.Lalayan carried out excavations of earthen graves of the Albanian period in the modern Qabala district in the vicinity of Nij and on the bank of the Turyanchay River [Халилов, 1985, с.13]. This was the first scientific excavation of Albanian monuments on the territory of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

An important step in the development of archaeology in Azerbaijan as a whole, including in the archaeological study of monuments of the ancient Albanian period, in the 20–30s of the 20th century, was the creation of the National Museum of History of Azerbaijan in 1920. In 1923, Azerbaijan Archaeological Committee and the Society for Survey and Study of Azerbaijan were established to provide systematic research of archaeological monuments on the territory of Azerbaijan. Thanks to the active efforts of these three above-mentioned scientific structures, the 20–30s of the 20th century was a period of development of national archaeologists. It was during this period that Davud Sharifov, Alesker Alekperov, Ishag Jafarzadeh, Ye.A.Pakhomov, Jacob Hummel, and Saleh Kaziyeu began their scientific archaeological activities. All of them made a significant contribution to the development of archaeological science in Azerbaijan, including the study of Albanian monuments of antiquity.

In 1926, the expedition of the National Museum of History of Azerbaijan headed by D.M.Sharifov investigated the earthen graves of antiquity in the area of Yaloylutapa. The graves contained a wide variety of objects, including pottery, tools and ornaments, including a Roman coin dating from the 1st century BC [Шарифов, 1927, с.7; Пахомов,

1965, с.22]. Russian archaeologists T.Passek and B.Latynin took interest in the materials of these excavations and published an article devoted to the analysis of ceramic material from the Yaloylutapa graves [Пассек, Латынин, 1927, с.217-222].

In the 20–30s of the 20th century, a large fieldwork was carried out to study the most common type of Albanian graves of antiquity, i.e. jar burials. The expeditions led by academician I.I.Meshchaninov and A.K.Alekperov explored dozens of jar burials in the Mil steppe, as well as in Shaki, Goychay, and other districts. According to A.K.Alekperov, jar burials were concentrated along the ancient highway along the Kura and then Rioni rivers. He also suggested that the bearers of this funeral rite could be one of the Albanian tribes, namely the Gargars, whose memory is preserved in a number of toponyms in the area of the Mil and Mugan steppe. In 1935, A.K.Alekperov at the II International Congress on Iranian Culture in Leningrad (now St.Petersburg) made a report on the jar burials of Azerbaijan [Алекперов, 1960, с.30-36].

In 1937, T.S.Passek studied a burial ground with earthen graves and jar burials in the Jafarkhan district of Sabirabad district. She also studied the extensive system of irrigation canals built in the middle and second half of the first millennium BC by connecting these ancient irrigation structures with Strabo's reports that the lands in Albania are irrigated by rivers and other waters better than in Egypt and Babylon [Пассек, 1946, с.169-188].

In the 30s, archaeologist and numismatist Ye.A.Pakhomov also studied settlements and burial grounds of the Albanian period. He had several trips to Ismayilli, Goychay, Aghjabadi and Mingachevir districts, where a number of burial grounds with jar burials were found [Пахомов, 1939, с.70-74; 1944, с.46-53]. In one of these trips, near Molla Isakli, Ye.A.Pakhomov found an antique terracotta statuette of superb artistry [Пахомов, 1936, с.23-28].

In the 1930s, one of the archaeologists who made a great contribution to the study of the many monuments of Caucasian Albania was S.M.Kaziyeu. As a researcher at the Museum of History of Azerbaijan, in the 1930s, he participated in more than 70 academic missions and expeditions that covered almost all regions of Azerbaijan [Jafarova, 2009, p. 14-20]. But most of all he was interested in the Albanian monuments of the Gabala area. In 1941, he defended his PhD thesis on the "Antiquities

of the Gabala Mahal”, in which he provided a detailed analysis of many monuments of this region including the first detailed description in Azerbaijani historical and archaeological literature of Gabala, the capital of Caucasian Albania [Джафарова, 2009, с.17]. In fact, this thesis was the first summary paper on the ancient period of the history of Caucasian Albania with an extensive use of archaeological and ethnographic material.

In the 30s, archaeological research of the monuments of the ancient Albanian period was also carried out in the Mingachevir area. In 1934–1938, the survey of the jar burials in the Mingachevir area was carried out by Ye.A.Pakhomov. S.M.Kaziyev also took an active part in these studies [Джафарова, 2009, с.38]. In 1939–1940, S.M.Kaziyev, having once again independently examined the surroundings of Mingachevir and made sure that there are valuable archaeological sites of various historical eras in this region, including the Albanian period, made a relevant statement at a meeting of the Presidium of the Azerbaijan Branch of the USSR Academy of Sciences and raised the question of the need to conduct extensive archaeological research in the Mingachevir zone. As a result, in 1941, by the decision of the Presidium of the Azerbaijan Branch of the USSR Academy of Sciences, the Mingachevir expedition was founded headed by S.M.Kaziyev. In order to identify and record all the archaeological sites in the Mingachevir area, the expedition began field research here in the spring of the same year. However, it was interrupted due to the attack of Nazi Germany against the USSR, which led to the beginning of the Great Patriotic War [Джафарова, 2009, с.39-40].

In general, the first half of the 20th century can be considered a period of accumulation of archaeological material in the field of Albanian studies and the emergence of the first professional archaeologists-Albanologists. But the potential was still not enough for a major breakthrough in this area. Large-scale comprehensive studies of archaeological sites were necessary in order to identify such a large amount of factual material that would allow scientifically sound reconstructions and generalizations of various aspects of the history and culture of Caucasian Albania on the basis of archaeological artifacts.

Such a breakthrough factor was the second Mingachevir archaeological mission. In 1946, in

connection with the construction of the largest hydroelectric power station in the Caucasus in the Mingachevir region, a vast territory was supposed to be alienated for industrial construction; what is more, an area of 65km² was to be allocated for an artificial reservoir. Taking into account the density of the numerous monuments (burial grounds, grave-mound, settlements, religious structures, etc.) in the power plant and reservoir construction zone, an archaeological mission was established at the initiative of the Presidium of the Academy of Sciences of the Azerbaijan SSR, which conducted large-scale and, for the first time, comprehensive research in the HPP construction zone for 8 years (1946–1953). Given the massive scale of the fieldwork to be carried out in the short time allotted for the construction of this power facility, the expedition had to operate all year round. S.M.Kaziyev was appointed the head of the expedition. It should be noted that this expedition in the Mingachevir area explored archaeological sites of a wide chronological range from the Eneolithic and Bronze Age to the Middle Ages, but mainly the monuments of the Albanian period. It was here in Mingachevir expedition headed by S.M.Kaziyeva that dozens of research associates of the Museum of History of Azerbaijan, Institute of History of the Azerbaijan SSR, teachers, postgraduates, and students of the History Department of the Azerbaijan State University were educated as archaeologists and mastered the technique of field research. Some of the members of this expedition, such as G.I.Ione, T.I.Golubkina, G.M.Aslanov, R.M.Vaidov, and J.A.Khalilov, later became prominent archaeologists-Albanologists.

As already mentioned, the Mingachevir expedition was a comprehensive one. Along with archaeologists, ethnographers and epigraphists (M.I.Atakishieva, Z.A.Kilchevskaya, A.N.Huseynov, T.A.Buniyatov) were involved in the expedition, while R.M.Kasimova [Касимова, 1960; 1971, с.44-53] studied the anthropological material, and N.A.Alekperov and N.O.Burchak-Abramovich studied the osteological materials. The famous paleobotanist V.A.Petrov, mineralogist G.G.Leimlen [Леймлен, 1949, с.83-87] and architect A.V.Salamzade were involved in the expedition activities. The spectral and chemical analysis of ancient metal items from Mingachevir was carried out by I.R.Selimkhanov. During various periods of the expedition, it was repeatedly visited by prominent

Russian archaeologists S.V.Kiselyov, A.A.Iessen, and B.B.Piotrovsky. For the 8 years of field work, an area of 35 thousand square meters was surveyed and more than 20 thousand artifacts were identified [Джафарова, 2009, с.42-43]. Several settlements of the Albanian period and hundreds of different types of antique graves were studied. These were earthen graves with skeletons stretched on their backs, ground graves with severely twisted and slightly twisted skeletons, jar burials, timber graves, catacombs, as well as combined catacomb-jar and catacomb-timber graves. Along with settlements and burial grounds, numerous industrial structures were investigated, including the remains of various craft workshops and pottery kilns [Ионе, 1951, с.31-77]. Thousands of different artifacts have been found in the graves and settlements of the Albania of antiquity. These were tools and household utensils, various weapons, jewelry, toreutic works, gems and bullae, religious objects, various tools of artisans, etc. The Albanian ceramics of antiquity were striking in their functional and artistic diversity. A large number of antique imports were found in Mingachevir, which evidenced the strong trade and economic ties of the Albania of antiquity with the surrounding world. This was also evidenced by the numerous antique coins minted in different countries and discovered in Mingachevir [Пахомов, 1951, с.141-146].

In the 1950s, on the basis of the already sufficiently extensive archaeological material, the first works on the history of the Albania of antiquity began to appear by drawing heavily on archaeological material. These were a series of articles by S.M.Kaziyev in the collections "Material Culture of Azerbaijan" [Казиев, 1949, с.9-49; 1951, с.5-30], articles by G.I.Ione [Ионе, 1946, с.399-406; 1948, с.451-457; 1951, с.31-77; 1953, с.82-97], articles by R.M.Vaidov [Вайдов, 1951, с.81-85; Вайдов, Фоменко, 1991, с.80-102] and G.M.Aslanov [Асланов, 1953, с.61-66].

In the 1950s and 1960s, the first summary papers on the history and culture of Caucasian Albania began to appear, in which archaeological materials were used to substantiate a wide range of historical problems. Among them we can mention the works by O.Sh.Ismizadeh [Исмизаде, 1956], N.M.Ivashchenko [Ивашченко, 1947, с.73-80], G.G.Leimlen [Леймлен, 1949, с.83-87], V.N.Leviatov [Левиатов, 1950, с.65-95], R.M.Kasimova [Касимова, 1960] and a lot of other researchers. But the real scientific sensation

was the fundamental work of K.V.Trever published in 1959, "Essays on the History and Culture of Caucasian Albania" [Тревер, 1959], in which the archaeological material of the Albanian period published by that time was widely presented. The analysis of this factual material allowed K.V.Trever to come to the conclusion that the perception of researchers about the Albania of antiquity lagging behind its neighboring countries in social development, which was based on written sources and especially Strabo's reports, "...does not hold water when covering this period with archaeological data" [Тревер, 1960, с.3]. The work of K.V.Trever was followed by the work of S.M.Kaziyev on the jar burials of Mingachevir [Казиев, 1960], the collective fundamental research of G.M.Aslanov, R.M.Saidova and G.I.Ione devoted to excavations in Mingachevir [Асланов, Вайдов, Ионе, 1959], and a summary paper on the Albania of antiquity by Z.I.Yampolsky [Ямпольский, 1962].

As we can see, in the 60–70s of the 20th century, a multi-vector Albanian studies were finally formed in Azerbaijan, which included studies in history, archeology, architecture, art history, anthropology, etc. The significant number of historians and archaeologists-Albanologists, who had been trained by that time at the leading scientific centers of Moscow and Leningrad (now St.Petersburg), allowed starting the large-scale studies of many antique monuments and, above all, of the cities of Caucasian Albania.

Taking into account the numerous unique materials found in the territory of the antique settlement in the Mingachevir area, identified by researchers with the city of Samunis mentioned in antique sources, it was decided to expand the study of the cities of the Caucasian Albania of antiquity. In 1959, the Qabala Archaeological Expedition was established, which continues its research to this day. From 1959 to 1971, the expedition was headed by S.M.Kaziyev and in the following years by G.M.Akhmedov and I.A.Babayev. This expedition, in which archaeologists-Albanologists R.B.Geyushev, I.A.Babayev, F.L.Osmanov, O.Sh.Ismizadeh, T.I.Golubkina and A.A.Karakhmedova were engaged in various years, made a huge contribution to the study of the history and culture of Caucasian Albania. The expedition established the original location of the Gabala of antiquity in the area known as Chakkallig [Babayev, Əhmədli, 1981, s. 8-21], and in the late 1st– early 2nd centuries, the center of the settlement

moved to the area of Selbir and Gala, where urban life continued until the late Middle Ages. The long-term studies of Gabala, as well as the Mingachevir excavations, have made an invaluable contribution to the study of the history of Albania in the antique and medieval period. In 1964, the fifth volume of the collection "Material Culture of Azerbaijan" was published, which was completely devoted to the results of the study of Gabala [Материальная культура Азербайджана, т.5, 1964]. The studies of the Gabala of antiquity have shown a high level of urban culture in Caucasian Albania, a highly developed urban layout, multidisciplinary handicraft trade, fundamental public and religious buildings, extensive international relations, etc. [Бабаев, 1990, с.62-101]. In addition to the numerous and diverse archaeological materials found in the layers of antiquity of Gabala and in its burial grounds, excavations have revealed a significant number of antique coins of the Hellenistic period. These were coins of Alexander of Macedon, Seleucid, Parthian, and Greco-Bactrian rulers, as well as Roman-era coins. Two hoards of antique coins discovered in Gabala were of particular scientific value [Бабаев, Казиев, 1971, с.16-32; Гошгарлы, 2020, с.80]. The Gabala and other hoards of antique coins found on the territory of Albania (Khynysli, Alibayramli, Nyudin, Sharakun, Lenkoran) clearly demonstrate the broad economic ties of Caucasian Albania with the outside world. Moreover, the demand for coins in Albania was so great that starting from the 3rd century BC, the Albans started minting their coins imitating various antique coins [Рәсәбли, 2012, с.33-68].

Therefore, the claims of some researchers, in particular representatives of the Armenian historical school, about the archaic character of Albanian society in antiquity, relying on Strabo's report that Albanians did not normally use hammered coins and were only involved in barter trade due to not knowing a number beyond hundred, were fully disproved by the massive numismatic material identified in the archaeological study of Caucasian Albanian monuments.

Another Albanian city of antiquity that became the subject of large-scale archaeological research in the second half of the 20th century was the Shamakhi (Kemakhia) of antiquity, also mentioned in antique sources. The active excavations in the area of the modern Shamakhi village of Khynysli, where traces of an ancient settlement and its burial grounds

were found, continued for more than 15 years. The expedition was headed by J.A.Khalilov, one of the leading archaeologists-Albanologists of Azerbaijan of that period. He explored more than 2000 m² of the area of the ancient settlement and a number of its burial grounds. Dozens of residential, public, religious buildings, industrial centers and buildings were identified and investigated; thousands of cultural artifacts, significant anthropological, osteological material and charred remains of wheat, barley, seeds of various fruit plants, etc. were found [Халилов, 1985, с.19-20]. It was in Khynysli that the local Albanian coins were first discovered, which accounts for the scientific significance of studying this monument.

In the 1970s, under the leadership of J.A.Khalilov, another major scientific project was implemented to make a list of archaeological monuments of northeastern Azerbaijan. Hundreds of archaeological sites of various historical epochs, including a number of settlements and burial grounds of the Albania of antiquity, were identified and initially examined here [Халилов, Кошкарлы, Аразова, 1991]. The burial grounds of antiquity investigated in this area, including those near Rustov in the Quba district [Халилов, 1974, с.58-59; Кошкарлы, 1985, с.44-45], ancient settlement and burial of Janakhar in Khachmaz district [Халилов, Кошкарлы, Аразова, 1991, с.109-113; Dostiyev, Qoşqarlı, 2011, s.103-109], and subsequently Altyagaj burial in Khizi district [Qoşqarlı, 2012, s.25, 102-105] have helped to expand the understanding of the linkages of Albania in the 1st century with the nomadic tribes of the Sarmatian-Alan circle. This area is also interesting because, according to Claudius Ptolemy, four large Albanian cities – Taleiba, Albana, Gelda and Gaitara – were located here, at the mouths of the Soana, Gerrhus, Kasia and Albana rivers [Птолемей 1948, V, II, 1]. It is possible that the antique settlement of Janakhar, which was discovered in the Khachmaz region and occupies a vast territory, is one of the cities of this region noted by Ptolemy.

Among the antique settlements of Albania studied, it is worth noting Torpaqqala [Vahidov, 1965, s.201-211]. Here, along with the settlement, earthen graves, jar burials and catacombs of the 1st centuries AD were also investigated [Халилов, 1985, с.20-21; Vahidov, 1965, s.207; Aslanov, 1961, s.33-35].

Among the large archaeological complexes of antiquity, it is worth noting the ancient settlement

of Gırlartapa in the Aghsu district. For many years, this monument was investigated by archaeologist F.Osmanov [Osmanov, 2006, s.74-126]. It was he who also studied many burial grounds of antiquity (Molla-Isakli, Nyudi, Uzunboyar) in the Aghsu and Ismayilli districts, which gave valuable artifacts on the material culture of Caucasian Albania [Османов, 2006].

The results of long-term research of many archaeological sites of Caucasian Albania of antiquity and the deep scientific analysis of the artifacts obtained allowed Azerbaijani scientists to publish a number of summary papers on this topic in the second half of the 20th century. Here, first of all, we can note the fundamental researches titled "Material Culture of Caucasian Albania" by J.A.Khalilov and "Cities of Caucasian Albania" by I.A.Babayev, "Caucasian Albania of Antiquity" by K.G.Aliyev, "The Typology of Burial Monuments of Antiquity in Azerbaijan" by G.O.Goshgarli, as well as a number of summary papers on the history of architecture [Ахундов, 1986] and the history of art [Рзаев, 1976] of Albania.

Along with the mentioned summary papers, Azerbaijani archaeologists have studied and summarized in their monographic works the ceramic production of the Albania of antiquity [Бадалов, 2003], weapons and military affairs of Albania [Алиев, 2008], glass production [Nuriyev, 1981], glyptics [Бабаев, 1965], toreutic works [Кошкарлы, 1989], tools [Мехтиев, 1990] and jewelry [Ахундова, 2020]. Special studies were devoted to the international relations of Caucasian Albania in the period of antiquity [Пасулова, 2008; Гошгарлы, 2001].

It should be noted that serious scientific research on the monuments of antiquity of Albania in Dagestan is carried out by Dagestani archaeologists. Thus, in various periods of the last century, researchers A.S.Bashkirov, M.I.Isayev, and later V.T.Kotovich studied the Torpakhkala settlement in the Derbent district, which, according to I.A.Babayev, may be one of the above-mentioned four cities of Albania in the Caspian zone [Бабаев, 1990, с.26-27]. Under the leadership of V.G.Kotovich, the Urtseki settlement was explored [Гаджиев, 2002, с.11; Маммиев, 1970], which is identified with the city of Varachan noted by Movses Kaghankatvatsi [Халилов, 1985, с.49]. Since the 1970s, Dagestani archaeologists have been studying the large settlement of Targu,

where the cultural layers of the Albanian-Sarmatian period of antiquity were revealed [Котович и др., 1983, с.57-82]. Since 1970, for more than 50 years, first under the leadership of A.A.Kudryavtsev, and then M.S.Gadzhiev, stationary studies have been conducted in Derbent where layers of Antiquity and early Medieval periods have been identified and studied. Scientists were able to solve the complex issues of chronology and stratigraphy, the time of the city's origin, the dynamics of its development, and its historical role in the ancient and medieval period [Кудрявцев, 1982; Гаджиев, 2002]. A great contribution to the study of antique cities and burial monuments of the Albania of antiquity was made by O.M.Davudov [Давудов, 1996].

As we can see, the excavations in Dagestan, organically complementing the research in Azerbaijan, recreate a single material culture of the Albania of antiquity with certain local features.

Unfortunately, at the end of the 20th century, as a result of the collapse of the USSR and the subsequent occupation of a large part of the territory of Azerbaijan by Armenia, archeological studies in Azerbaijan were temporarily suspended. However, already at the beginning of the 21st century, large-scale excavations resumed, including those on antique Albanian monuments. During this period, while continuing research on many of the above-mentioned monuments, studies of antique Albanian monuments in the area of the Lowland Karabakh and Nakhchivan also began. The most extensive research is carried out on the site of Shortepe identified with the Barda of antiquity [Мәммədov, Əliyev, 2013, s.208-211; 2015, s.207-210; 2017, s.234-245], and on the site of Galatapa which some researchers identify with the Albanian city of Ainiana mentioned by Strabo [Страбон, кн.ХІ, гл.7,1]. Here, together with the ancient settlement, its burial grounds with earthen graves and jar burials are also being explored [Əliyev, 2012, s.216-234; 2013, s.202-207; 2015, s.199-206; 2017, s.225-232].

In the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic, a large ancient urban-type settlement, Meydantepe, has been studied for many years [Bədalov, Əsədov, 2012, s.221-225; 2013, s.198-201; Bədalov, 2015, s.193-198; Bədalov, 2017, s.215-220]. Currently, the Department of Antique Archaeology of the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography is completing the preparation for the publication of a fundamental collective summary paper, which will reflect all the

main studies of antique monuments of Caucasian Albania.

Today, it can be noted with full confidence that archaeological research of ancient monuments of Albania not only led to a revision of previously established views on the history, culture and social structure of the Albanian state and society of that period, but also became a kind of marker defining the borders of this state in Antiquity – from the Caucasus Mountains in the north to the Aras in the south, from the Caspian coast in the east to Lake Goycha in the west. This is especially important due to the fact that reports of antique authors about the borders of the Caucasus states in Antiquity, which are contradictory and confusing and do not always

reflect the historical reality, are often used to annex the original Albanian territories, in particular, Mil, Mugan, Karabakh (highland) and other zones on the right bank of the Kura, to the territory of ancient Armenia. This is often used to justify today's claims to the internationally recognized lands of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Today, after the triumphant liberation of the historical lands of Azerbaijan occupied by Armenia, which were part of Albania in antiquity, the Institute of Archaeology, Ethnography and Anthropology of ANAS is preparing a large-scale program of archaeological research in the liberated districts. The study of Albanian monuments of Antiquity on these lands will undoubtedly be one of the priority areas.

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Kwon Ohyoung

*Professor at Department of Korean History,
Seoul National University (Korea)*

Jabiyev Gafar

*Chief Researcher of the Early Medieval Archaeology Department
of the Institute of Archaeology, Ethnography and Anthropology
of ANAS, Doctor of Historical Sciences, Professor*

Kim Jongil

*Professor at Department of Archaeology and Art History,
Seoul National University (Korea)*

Najafova Irada M.

*Leading Researcher of the History and Theory of Archaeological Heritage
Department of the Institute of Archaeology, Ethnography and Anthropology
of ANAS, PhD in History, Associate Professor / SEBA*

Sohn Jaehyeon

Research Associate at Asia Centre, Seoul National University (Korea)

ELEMENTS OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT IN CAUCASIAN ALBANIA IN THE CONTEXT OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL STUDY OF GABALA

The name of Gabala city (in the form of *Cabalaca*) was first mentioned as a capital city of the state of Caucasian Albania in written sources in the 1st century AD in the “Natural history” encyclopedic work of the famous Roman scientist Pliny the Elder [Babayev, Əhmədov, 1981, p.3].

Information about Gabala was encountered in works of Claudius Ptolemy (2nd century), Al-Balazuri (9th century), Ibn Khavgal (10th century), Al-Mugaddasi (10th century), Yagut al-Hamavi (13th century), Badr Shirvani (15th century), Abbasgulu agha Bakikhanov (19th century) [The History of Gabala, 2017, p.27, 52, 64, 69 and other pages] and etc.

Along with written sources on history of Gabala city, archaeological sources are valuable as well. Archaeological excavations carried out since 1926 under the leadership of Davud bey Sharifov, Saleh Gaziye, Omar Ismizade, Gara Ahmedov, Ilyas Babayev, Firudin Gadirov, Gafar Jabiyev [The History of Gabala, 2017, p.30] and others allow to determine the existence of Gabala city in the 5th century BC. The remains of ancient Gabala city are located south to Baku–Shaki highway near Chukhur Gabala, Mirzebeyli,

Tovla and Shamli villages of Gabala region of the Azerbaijan Republic.

New stages of Gabala archaeological researches

Upon the initiative and support of SEBA (Seoul–Baku) Azerbaijan-Korea Cultural Exchange Association, a new stage of archaeological study of Gabala was launched with the involvement of the Institute of Archeology and Ethnography of the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences since 2005 and with the involvement of Korean specialists since 2009. The main study object of archaeological expedition in 2005–2019 was three areas of Gabala city – Antique city area, Salbir and Gala areas. It is worth reminding that these areas are located on the territory of the Gabala State Historical–Artistic Preserve.

Very valuable and diverse findings about development stages of the city and urbanization culture, which are of research interest, were revealed as a result of studies.

The Ancient city area, where the city was first emerged and developed, had a habitation from the

5th century BC until the 1st century AD. Remains of five oval-shaped public buildings (the biggest of them is 1385 cm²) built in the 3rd century BC–1st century AD, a workshop dated to the 3rd–2nd centuries BC with kilns for making single-legged vases, and a food warehouse dated to the 4th–3rd centuries BC with remains of over 200 household jars (pithos) used for storage of wines, nuts etc. were found in that Antique city area.

Defensive walls, building foundations, wall remains, roof tiles, brick floors, workshops, bathrooms, basins, water pipelines, sewage lines, graves including catacombs, ceramicware, household wells, jars-pithos, furnaces-ovens, local and foreign money, arms, tools of a trade, ornaments, celadon, porcelain, and glassware and so on were found in *Salbir area*.

Numerous furnaces, workshops and other building remains relating to residential blocks as well as to ceramic craftsmen, building floors, streets and their crossings, water systems made of ceramic pipes, bathrooms, furnaces-ovens, money, faience, porcelain and celadon ware samples obtained through trading and cultural relations, rich and various colored lamps, tools of a trade, ornaments etc. were found during the excavations in *Gala area*. Bricks, slabs used in construction and materials used for facade were presumably produced in the city or in its surroundings.

The discovered findings suggest that such fields of art as pottery, metal processing, construction, jewelry etc. were developed in Gabala. Items and money brought from outside prove that Galaba had trading relations with other cities and countries. The conclusion that geographical area of such relations extends from Europe to China can therefore be arrived at based on such materials.

Studies at Salbir area

The main purposes of the studies carried out by the Azerbaijan-Korean International Archaeological Expedition in Gabala at Salbir area starting from 2009 are: 1) to obtain archaeological data on urbanization process and early state building and on Caucasian Albania in particular; 2) to achieve sustainable mutual understanding on East-West civilization exchange; 3) to conduct joint excavation works and undertake knowledge and experience exchange of Azerbaijani and Korean archeologists in order to promote goodwill between two countries.

To date, ten season study works have been carried out in total. A lot of results have been obtained from the studies undertaken up to date since the first study season in 2009. For example, investigations of the city's northern fortress walls have been completed, making it possible to trace in detail the wall construction process, which started in the 1st century BC and continued until the Middle Ages. The studies additionally carried out during this period in the area close to city's western walls revealed the presence of a "necropolis", which was used from ancient times up to the Middle Ages and mainly consisted of catacombs as well as various buildings and ovens, water supply and sanitary facilities, kilns, household wells and other material culture remains.

Therefore, studies carried out in Salbir area also allowed to reveal, albeit partially, the highly developed urban structure. As a result of such studies, it also became possible to identify various advanced construction techniques, which were used to build fortress walls and other buildings of the city. Studied grave types and grave items help to shed a significant light on the nature of exchange relationships of Caucasian Albania with neighboring states and cultures. Moreover, glassware found in graves including Roman produced glassware allows to gain an in-depth understanding of the nature of cultural exchange, which extended between the East and the West from Rome to the Korean peninsula and Japanese archipelago. The findings of archaeological studies allow an in-depth and detailed study of a number of problems of the antique and medieval history of not only Gabala, but also the whole region.

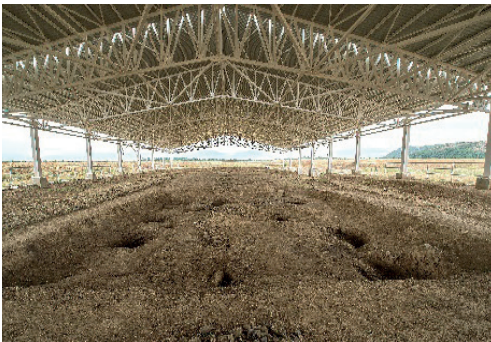
It is worth reminding that the reports published by SEBA [you can find the list of the reports in the references section] on an annual basis provided detailed information on findings obtained as a result of excavations carried out in the northern and western walls of Salbir area, architectural works and the kurgan dating to the Bronze Age studied in Dizakhli.

Structure and construction method of city fortress walls

Gabala city area, which is covered by a single fortress wall system, consists of two main parts – Salbir area in the north and Gala area in the south. In the Middle Ages, the city area was divided into two parts by a trench dug in the middle. So, originally Salbir area did not have a southern wall. In addition, the few



Remains of the food warehouse dated to the 4th–3rd centuries BC / Antique site



Conservation of the 1st oval public building dated to the 1st century BC – 1st century AD / Antique site



View of the Salbir and Gala sites



Chamber in catacomb No.1 with burial and items dated to the 2nd–3rd centuries AD / Salbir site

remains of eastern wall were destroyed as a result of erosion. Therefore, only the northern wall and the western wall of Salbir remain at present. The northern part of the city area called Gala was also strengthened by fortress walls in the 11th century. The said fortress walls were studied by G.Ahmadov and G.Jabiyev.

The northern fortress walls of Salbir were also partially studied in the past by Azerbaijan archeologists through test excavations in a number of locations. The northern fortress wall was found to be reconstructed several times after it was first built. Recent research suggests that the first and second walls (earthen wall) appear to have been built in Antiquity. It is hard to date the third wall, but it should be noted that Azerbaijani archeologists dated this wall built of raw brick to the Sassanid period. The fourth wall built of both stone and raw brick can be dated to the Middle Ages because similar structure found at the western fortress wall was confidently dated to Middle Ages.

The western fortress walls of Salbir were built and repaired at three stages. The first wall was built using dark-grayish blue sandy soil and gray brown sandy clayey soil. The ancient timber grave was destroyed during that construction process; a similar sequence was also noticed at the northern fortress wall. The second wall was built in a way similar to the third wall of the northern wall by piling raw bricks up. First large-size, then middle-size and finally small-size bricks were piled up. The studies of both the layout and the upper and outer portions of the wall facing the cross-section proved that raw bricks were piled up in an ordered fashion to form the wall structure.

Thus, it can be confirmed that the first wall of the western wall corresponds to the second wall of the northern wall; the second wall of the western wall corresponds to the third wall of the northern wall; the third wall of the western wall corresponds to the fourth wall of the northern wall.

In addition to the above, it is worth noting that during the studies carried out in 2009 under the leadership of professor G.Jabiyev, remains of fortress walls dated to the 1st century BC were found at the south–east edge of Gala area of the city. Such remains are totally similar to early age fortress walls across the northern and western edge of Salbir. It means that already in the 1st century BC there was a crowded urban life at Salbir and Gala areas surrounded by single and magnificent fortress walls. This is Gabala, the same capital city of the ancient Azerbaijani state Caucasian Albania which was mentioned in the encyclopedic work of Pliny the Elder (“Praevalent oppidum Albaniae Cabalaca”) (Plin.NH.VI.29) [The History of Gabala, 2017, p.27]. The findings at Gala area dated to Antiquity were first discovered in the 70s of the last century by professor G.Ahmadov. A wine warehouse and a magnificent grave dated to the 1st century AD found in IV excavation area can be mentioned in this regard.

Study of intra-city infrastructure

The terrain of Salbir area is higher in the western part and relatively low-lying towards the eastern part. A part of the area close to the western fortress wall constitutes flat terrace, where the archaeological findings of recent years have been mainly concentrated. The chronological framework of findings extends from Antiquity up to the 11th–12th centuries. Timber graves, catacombs and warehouse well remains mostly prevail among the findings relating to the early period of settlement layer, while the upper layer

is mostly prevailed by buildings, furnaces, various types of hearths, water supply and sanitary facilities, household wells and other findings. Catacombs, water supply and sanitary facilities among them are the most remarkable findings, which prove the emergence and development of urbanization in Caucasian Albania. Remains of square-shape building built of raw bricks and base stones were found at the area. Although it was difficult to understand the purpose and function of this building, the absence of hearths and water facilities, as well as the use of raw brick floor accompanied by small base stones increases the likelihood that this building was not used for everyday habitation. Perhaps, the said building is a special purpose building where burial rites were held.

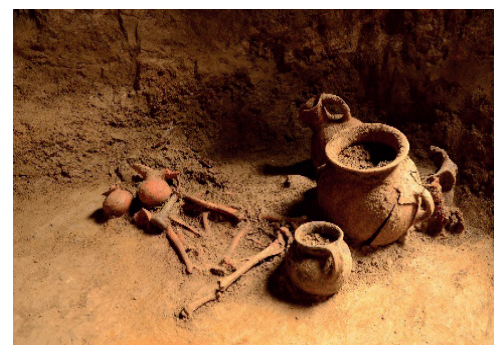
Buildings at Salbir area dated to the Middle Ages were presumably used mostly for everyday living. The strong walls of houses constitute a beehive-like structure. Although limited excavation area and stratigraphic faults do not allow getting a clear picture of the overall nature of the object, the following common characteristics of the walls can still be determined: walls were mainly built of raw bricks with inclusion of various materials such as stones, tiles and ceramics. The use of different materials may be a feature of the original wall construction process or may be the result of subsequent additional repair of the wall. Streets, squares and remains of numerous buildings dated to the Middle Ages were found and studied at Gala area of the city in 1985–1990 and 2008–2019. A public building found and studied in the 60s of the last century by S. Gaziyeu is the most magnificent building of the city dated to the Middle Ages. All these are very important in terms of exploration of the internal infrastructure of the city and architectural elements in the Azerbaijani cities of the Middle Ages in general.

Ovens in Salbir area were mainly built inside the wells but at various depths. Only the lip of some of them is visible, while the other part is half buried to the ground. In order to facilitate the ventilation at the foundation (lower part) of ovens, pipes (made of the same clay material, which was used at water supply and sanitary facilities) were attached at an angle. Lower parts of the pipes were laid below the floors of building, while upper parts were placed to the remaining parts above living space of the buildings. Ovens were found in two places – at the center of buildings or attached to the building walls. The second option is more common. Since the lifecycle of such ovens did not exceed 10 years, they would, most likely, have required quite frequent repair and replacement. In fact, it was possible to identify several ovens were built in the same area with the same dimensions and the same structure and determine that they were buildings with several ovens available inside of them. In addition to the ovens used to make bread, many hearths used to make soups or tea were found as well. Many of the hearths were located close to the building walls. While the hearths were used to make soups, in most cases tiles were placed over the ground to prevent the fire. The hearths used to make tea were smaller in comparison with the hearths used to make soups.

Another interesting structure built according to a plan was found. It consisted of two circles of regularly piled bricks. The inner circle was made by piling up two layers of bricks, while four layers were observed in the outer circle. The foundation consisting of clay and pottery crumbs was located under the brick structure. The diameter of the outer circular structure is 4.63 m, and the diameter of the inner circular structure is 3.65 m. This structure was located close to the top of the western wall about 20 m away



Findings in catacomb No.1 dated to the 2nd–3rd centuries AD / Salbir site



View of the catacomb No.8 dated to the 2nd–3rd centuries AD / Salbir site



Western fortress walls dated to the 6th century / Salbir site



Northern fortress walls dated to the 2nd and 6th centuries / Salbir site



Conservation of the northern fortress walls dated to the 2nd and 6th centuries / Salbir site



Towers of the southern gate of the city dated to the 9th century / Gala site



Conical vessel dated to the 11th–12th centuries ("Ali" is written in its body by Arabic letters) / Gala site



Faience bowl dated to the 14th–18th centuries / Gala site

from the building groups. The space between the inner and outer circles formed a trench-like structure through which water flowed. Although the purpose of this structure is presently unclear, it was presumably used as a washing facility for religious ceremonies.

Water supply and sanitary facilities dated to various ages were found within the study area. They consisted of pipelines and irrigation ditches, which facilitated water flow: those built using baked bricks and pipes and those consisting of only irrigation pitches cut into the ground. The pipelines were presumably used for water supply, while irrigation ditches were presumably used for sanitary purposes.

Over 100 wells dated to Antiquity and Middle Ages were studied at Salbir area. It is interesting that the prevalence of wells increases in proportion to the distance from the fortress walls. According to functionality, the wells can be divided into household wells, pits and grooves. As to the household wells, their diameter-depth ratio is 1:1.5 providing wide space within the well. Although no evidence of the presence of large storage containers inside the wells were observed at Salbir area, the preservation of various types of items (for example, wheat, dishes, arms, pottery etc.) separately within the buildings suggest that those wells were used for storing purposes. The dimensions of pits considered to be well structures exceed 10 m and are extremely deep. The diameters of pits' openings are 1.3–1.7 m.

The intra-city water supply network extends across the entire study area and goes outside the area towards north and south. Like pipelines, those facilities were also designed for water to flow from north to south. For example, water supply at Gala located south of Salbir was presumably secured through water sources from relatively high areas in the north. This water supply system discovered across the western shore of Salbir in 2008–2009 under the leadership of professor G.Jabiyev plays a significant role in justification of this interpretation.

Kilns used to fire potteries dated to the Middle Ages were also found during studies at Salbir area. The foundation consisting of a firebox and a firing chamber is the only surviving part of this structure. The floor and corners of the firebox are shaped like a rectangle. The walls were found to contain slight sintering signs and to be connected to the firing chamber (where pottery is placed). The firebox is mainly located below the ground, while the firing chamber is mainly located above the ground. There are openings, which allow the heat to be conveyed between the firebox and the firing chamber. It enabled to fire ceramic samples located in the firing chamber or hung on the clay hook. It is worth reminding that, two kilns were found in 1961 in the area of the city called Gala by O.Ismizade [Исмизаде, 1963, p.19], and ten more kilns and previously one furnace used to fire glass bracelets were found in 2008–2013 by professor G.Jabiyev [Cəbiyev, 2003, p.31; The Gabala Archaeological Expedition, 2014, p.263; The Gabala Archaeological Expedition, 2015, p.110].

Characteristics of graves

Various types of graves including wooden coffins, pit graves, tile graves, jar coffins and catacombs were found at Salbir area. Twenty catacomb graves were found and studied there during the study period. Various types of burial accessories were found from catacombs No. 1, 8 and 13. While talking about their main specificity, we need to underline that, for example, catacomb No.1

consists of a vertical ditch and corridor. The corridor is rectangular in plan; its length is more than 170 cm and width 100 cm. The burial chamber is located at the south of the corridor. The floor levels of the corridor and the burial chamber are identical. The floor of the burial chamber is round in plan and relatively even, and its ceiling is shaped like a semicircular dome. The burial chamber has a length of about 195 cm and width of 155 cm. There is a door frame at the entrance to the burial chamber, which indicates that a wooden unit had been used to close off the entrance.

The artifacts obtained from catacomb No.1 consist of the following: eleven ceramic ware (including mounted cup), one buckle, one bronze ring from the western part of the burial chamber; one buckle, two bronze bracelets, two fibulas and over 673 beads from the central part of the burial chamber; one pottery jar from the eastern part of the burial chamber. Interestingly, no human remains were discovered in this catacomb, but the presence of two buckles at different locations suggest that additional burials took place.

Wells, water pipelines and ditches of Salbir western corridor dated to the Middle Ages were partially destroyed. It seems from catacomb No.8 that graves were added to this catacomb at least twice later on. During the original burial, a corridor (shaped like a long rectangle in plan) was dug almost vertically with at least four steps. As regards to the additional burial, it was difficult to determine for certain how the deceased was laid down into the burial chamber. The corridor of the catacomb was dug at 30–45° angles. This catacomb was found to be 465 cm in length and 170 cm in width and at the depth of about 4.66 m from ground surface. The artifacts found from this catacomb consist of the following: one jar with handle, one bottle with handle, one coin, two bronze items, seven iron items from the southern part of the burial chamber; about fifty iron arrowheads and spearheads from the western corner of the burial chamber; various artifacts from the northern part of the burial chamber including one big ceramic jar with stone lid, one bottle with handle, five jars with handle, two items of Roman glassware and two iron pitchforks. The large volume ceramic jar was found to contain a tooth that had been deliberately pulled out, one ornament and a jar with handle containing a small amount of animal bones. A pit with a diameter of 38 cm and depth of 16 cm was found on the floor of the northern part of the burial chamber. It contained an iron item of unknown function. The



City quarter dated to the 14th–18th centuries / Gala site



Gabala Archaeological Centre

human bones found from the burial chamber are likely to be of a female.

Catacomb No.13 has a corridor and a burial chamber with semicircular dome structure. A human skeleton was found on the floor of the burial chamber. The deceased had been laid to rest in a crouched position with a head and body facing eastwards and arms upon the chest. A bracelet consisting of black amber, bone, red agate and glass beads was found close to the spine of the skeleton. Outside of the rectangular space where the skeleton was found, one jar with two handles and a jar with four handles was found within a mold infilled with high-density grayish white soil.

It is worth reminding that a similar phenomenon was also observed in catacomb No.8, the burial chamber of which was sealed off after the original burial.

Jar burial tradition had also been noticed in the area during the study. A large jar was placed into a shallow pit dug into the ground surface of the time. Due to its small size, the large jar could only barely fit into the pit, and since the jar was placed at an angle, the lip appeared outside the pit. The remains of a single individual identified to be a middle-aged female

were found inside the jar. Based on its location, the jar burial dates to the late stage of the Ancient Period or early Middle Ages. The fact that the jar burial was buried not completely but partially is of an interest. This is the only jar burial found at Salbir area. This is also a grave used at catacomb No.3 as a secondary burial. The large size of the jar suggests that the deceased could have been placed into the grave in an intact state.

The artifacts found inside the jar consist of ornaments such as one necklace consisting of various materials (bone, glass, black amber, and red agate), seven bronze rings, and earrings made of thin bronze rods. Beads used in the necklace consist of the following: two ornaments made of bones (one large, one small), one ceramic bead, fifteen rectangular beads made of bones (some of them were found coated with black organic matter), two sawtooth-shaped beads (glass or stone), fourteen polygonal tubular bone beads, fourteen round bone beads (two large, twelve small), one red agate bead, six tooth-shaped black amber beads, one small shell obtained through foreign trade, three date-shaped bone beads, one date-shaped glass bead, two large tubular beads, and one pair of glass beads.

It should be noted that a great number of jar burials dated to the early centuries of our era were found and studied in 60–70s of the last century at Gala area of Gabala, i.e. in front of and south from the southern fortress walls, as well as during studies at Kamaltepe area.

Thus, we can conclude that much information on Salbir area was gathered as a result of excavation works carried out during last ten seasons. This includes information on the structure and date of the city fortress walls, various archaeological finds related to handicrafts and everyday life from antiquity to the Middle Ages, the specific nature and types of these finds, and various grave (burial) types. Such types of graves include catacombs, wooden coffins, tile and earthen graves. Based on this information on the city fortress walls, various building areas and pits, wells and water supply facilities, it became possible to make inferences about the urban spatial structure of Salbir, the historical role and essence of this walled city, the nature of everyday life of Salbir and the urbanization process of Caucasian Albania.

The emergence of catacombs at Salbir area (Gabala and other regions of Azerbaijan) can be expected to be associated with the arrival of the Sarmatians,

Massagets and Alans to Albania beginning from the end of 1st millennium BC. It should be noted that the discovery of such a big catacomb concentration is a very rare occurrence dating to the 1st–2nd centuries AD. The identity of individuals buried in catacombs found at Salbir area, as well as the context of funeral rites within the city covered by fortress walls are the topics to be revisited in the future. It is obvious that these discovered archaeological evidences are of great significance in terms of understanding the history of Caucasian Albania. In particular, the Parthian coin (II Artabanus) discovered in catacomb No.8 and the seal from the Sassanid period found inside one of the kilns can be regarded as an evidence of intensive exchange that took place between Caucasian Albania and Iran at that time.

It should be noted that along with archaeological excavations, starting from 2010, open-air conservation of some monuments is being undertaken with the support of SEBA Association. More precisely, the northern wall of Salbir (490 m²) and the western block (2112 m²) have undergone conservation and a structure has been built over them. At the same time, a structure has also been built over the 1st oval building foundation (2376 m²) at the antique site.

The first and the only Gabala Archaeological Centre in Azerbaijan has been built by SEBA Association in order to protect our history and cultural heritage, pursue the archaeological studies, enable our valuable scientists to conduct scientific research and create conditions for their accommodation and work. The official opening of the Centre took place on 22 September 2014 with the participation of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Mr. Ilham Aliyev.

The Centre consists of two exhibition halls (museum), a rehabilitation laboratory, an archaeological fund, a conference hall, a library, a medical station, a canteen, 24 rooms for two or three people, open-air exhibition space, and offices for employees of the Gabala State Historical-Artistic Preserve under the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Findings of the studies were published in Baku and Seoul and presented in the documentary named “Gabala—capital city of Caucasian Albania” prepared by Baku Media Centre under the order of SEBA Association.

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Annual reports:

Museyibli Najaf*Deputy Director for Scientific Affairs of the Institute of Archaeology, Ethnography and Anthropology of ANAS, Doctor of Historical Sciences, Professor***Najafov Shamil***Leading Research Fellow of the Ethnoarcheology Department of the Institute of Archaeology, Ethnography and Anthropology of ANAS, PhD in History, Associate Professor*

MONUMENTS OF ANTIQUITY IN AGHSTAFI

Ganja–Gazakh region is rich in archeological monuments of different historical periods. In this region, which is one of the historical territories of ancient Azerbaijani state Caucasian Albania, the monuments of Antiquity (4th century BC–3rd century AD) – both settlements and tombs – have been relatively little studied. In general, the urban remains of Caucasian Albania in the territory of Azerbaijan have been studied more than rural settlements. As a result of archeological rescue excavations carried out by the expedition of the Archeology and Ethnography Institute of the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences (ANAS) in connection with construction work in the Baku–Tbilisi–Ceyhan (BTC) oil and South Caucasus (SCP) gas pipeline corridor in 2002–2005, numerous rural settlements and tombs belonging to Albanian culture were examined. In the pipeline corridor, earthen graves, jar burials, timber graves and catacombs from the abovementioned period, i.e. main types of graves belonging to Caucasian Albania, were excavated and studied. This article presents the results of archeological excavations carried out by the authors in those years in the settlements and catacombs of Antiquity near Poylu village of Aghstafa district. These monuments include rural-type Poylu I settlement and catacombs built in this settlement and those built later in multi-layered Poylu II settlement.

Poylu I settlement. Poylu I settlement is located near Poylu railway station in the territory of the eponymous village of Aghstafa district, approximately 500–600 m north-east of the station. The archeological site located south of the Kura River is named Poylu I because of the discovery of two eponymous settlements in the corridor of the pipelines (at kilometer 408.8 and 409.2 of the

route of the pipelines) in the territory of Poylu. Poylu I settlement located 215 m above the sea level at kilometer 409.1 is multi-layered. Prior to the construction of the pipelines, the presence of an archeological site in this area was not recorded. Because no surface features were observed in the area that could attract attention from the outside. The settlement was discovered by the archeological monitoring team during the removal of the topsoil with machinery. The entire surrounding area is used for planting and mowing. Even the remnants of structures and traces of house foundations of recent times can be found nearby [Nəcəfov, 2006, s.7].

The total area of the settlement is about one hectare.

During the excavations, which took place in the winter months, it was not possible to continue digging in some excavation squares (1, 2, 3A) to the end of the cultural layer due to the rise of groundwater to the upper parts of the soil after a certain depth in those squares [Nəcəfov, 2006, s.7].

Archeological excavations in the Poylu I settlement were carried out in a four-meter-wide strip, where the BTC oil pipeline was supposed to pass. Excavations were carried out to a depth of 70–80 cm in some squares and 1.2–1.3 m in others [Nəcəfov, 2011, s.44].

As a result of the excavations, it turned out that there were material and cultural remains of the Late Chalcolithic Age, Antiquity and the Middle Ages in the territory of the site.

The portion of the cultural layer from the modern earth surface to a depth of 40 cm is rich in medieval material remains. This depth layer has been almost destroyed and mixed over many years of planting. This layer is followed by a soil layer of

about 5 cm mixed with ash and, in some places, coal residues.

At a depth of 40 to 80 cm, and, in some places up to a meter, the cultural layer of Antiquity is observed. The stratum of the cultural layer belonging to Antiquity is rich in finely made and high-quality ceramic samples baked at a stable temperature, as well as hearths. Observing the cultural layer of Antiquity throughout the entire excavation area, it becomes clear that in certain squares it breaks and appears mixed with materials belonging to the first cultural layer. For example, in the 7th, 8th and 13th squares, at a depth of 60–70 cm, ceramic samples from both Antiquity and Middle Ages were discovered [Nəcəfov, 2006, s.10].

Ceramics. A number of ceramic samples were found in the cultural layer of Poylu I settlement dating to Antiquity. These ceramic samples included mainly crocks, jugs, basins, churns, pitchers, jars and cups of red, black, pink or gray color, made of pure clay and well baked (Fig. 1 and 2). The rims of these thin-walled vessels were decorated by pressing and carving. The rims of the basins are simple and often end as a continuation of the body. The rims of cup fragments, which make up the majority, have a rich design.

The rims of most vessels were decorated with indentations and circlets pressed in different directions [Nəcəfov, 2006, s.15-16]. Three well-polished samples (bowl, pitcher and jug fragments) were found. Fragments of painted pottery were also found.

During the excavations, the remains of large *household jars* were found in Poylu I settlement. Almost all of them are fragments of the mouth, body and base parts of the jars. Based on these fragments, it was determined that the jars, the clay of which contains a mixture of coarse sand, fine sand and fine gravel, were thick-walled. The length of gray and pink jar fragments varies from 0.9 to 1.8 cm. Household jars baked at an unstable temperature have a small flat base, a pear-shaped body, a cylindrical neck, and an outward-folded rim with edging. Their bodies are usually surrounded by an ornamental belt. This kind of belts often have wavy lines drawn by scratching and carving. The discovery of only the bodies and bases of these jars, which were usually buried vertically and had long been used to store certain food products (especially cereals), can be explained by the fact that the site has long been plowed with

machinery for planting, and as a result, the upper parts of these jars are, in most cases, completely destroyed.

The *crocks* found in Poylu I settlement were mostly dark gray and sometimes black. They are spherical and come in a variety of sizes. Fragments of narrow-necked crocks are also found. The fragments show that the surfaces of the crocks were well polished and coated with engobe. The rims are usually folded outward. Crock-type vessels make up the majority of the vessels of Antiquity found in Poylu I settlement. They are mainly thick-walled with flat bases and are of high quality. They are simple in terms of patterns [Nəcəfov, 2006, s.15-16].

Jug-shaped vessels also make up a certain portion of the ceramic ware found in Poylu I settlement. They are mainly elongated, with flat bases and narrow necks. The jug handles connecting the rim with the shoulder are round and ribbon-shaped (Fig. 1.13; 2.7-11). The clay of this kind of vessels was well kneaded and well baked, with a thin layer of engobe applied to the surface. The jug found in the catacomb of Antiquity was well made. It has a spout and its surface is well polished (Fig. 4.6). It should be noted that very few of such spouted vessels and vessel fragments were found in Poylu I settlement. F.I.Osmanov considers spouted milk pitchers, pots with a rectangular folded rim and jugs with a spherical body to be characteristic of the initial periods of Caucasian Albania [Osmanov, 2006, s.57]. After a while, between the 2nd century BC and the 1st century AD, these jugs were superseded by jugs with a spherical body, with a triangular rim and an elongated duck-beak spout. They attract attention with their elegance, quality and esthetically pleasing shades [Qaziyev, 1960a; Osmanov, 2006].

Some of the spherical narrow-necked jugs of Antiquity discovered in the territory of Agstafa district are commonly found in the archeological sites of the Early Iron Age located in the territory of Gazakh district [Xəlilov, 1958, I tablo, şəkil 3, II tablo, şəkil 1, 3, 4; 17, III tablo, şəkil 1]. Despite differing in period and style of preparation, they are similar in the composition of clay and have a certain degree of similarity in decorations.

The clay composition of the *bowls* from Antiquity found in Poylu I settlement was mixed with fine sand and well-baked (Fig. 2.1). There is no pattern element on the bowls. The small number of mostly gray, thin-walled *churn* fragments (three

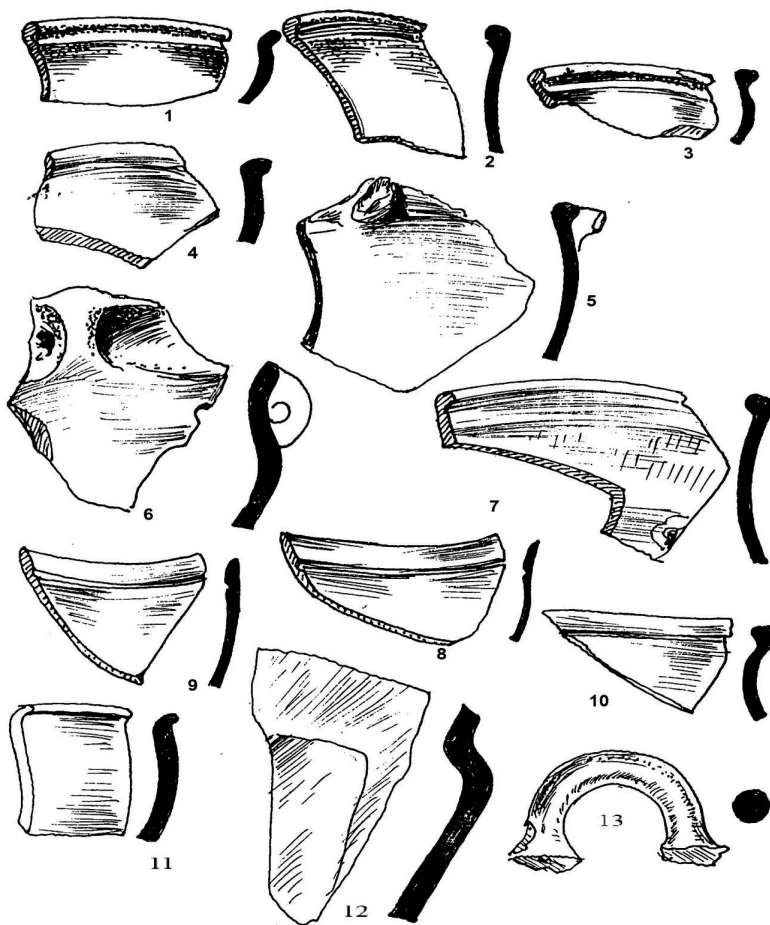


Fig. 1. Ceramics of Antiquity found in Poylu I settlement

pieces) with thick bases are from the mouth and shoulder parts of the vessels they represent. The body and base of the gray polished churn-type pottery vessel found at a depth of 75 cm in the 8th square have been preserved in good condition. Vessels such as *mugs* and *oil lamps* were found mainly in the 15th square and in the catacomb of Poylu I settlement. Some of them are thick-walled, crudely handcrafted and baked at unstable temperatures. The presence of thick soot and burn marks on the oil lamps indicates that they were widely used in everyday life [Nəcəfov, 2006, s.14-15].

Very few clay *cups* are found in Poylu I settlement. They are gray or black with small handles. The cups, crudely crafted and baked at unstable temperatures, have a wide mouth, a slightly narrow neck, a broad body, and a relatively narrow and flat base. Such clay cups usually have one or two handles. Samples of double-handled clay cups were occasionally found [Osmanov, 2006, s.22].

The few fragments of *goblet*-type clay vessels found in the said stratum of Poylu I settlement are predominantly light red in color. Most often they are represented by fragments of the body or base. They have thick walls and are well made. Dark-red *vase* fragments were also found among the pottery fragments in the layer of Antiquity of

the settlement. They have a bowl-shaped body and a concave base. One whole and one broken-off bases of this vase, which consists of fragments of several vessels of the same shape, have been found. Based on the remains of the broken-off vessel base, it was established that it had been made separately and then glued to the body. Pattern elements are rarely found on the vase-type vessel fragments.

Ewer-type vessel fragments also constitute a minority. The rims of ewer fragments are partially everted, and the necks are concave. Ewer fragments found in Girag Kasaman II Antique settlement are slightly different from the ewer fragments found in Poylu I settlement [Müseyibli və b., 2008; Müseyibli və b., 2012, s.185]. This difference can be seen in the method of preparation and elegance. That is, although the ewers found in Poylu I settlement retain the same shape, they gradually become cruder.

The neck of a wide-necked ewer-type vessel fragment is surrounded by a concave line and punctures. There are moldings of round buttons in three equidistant places across the attachment point of the handle to the body. This type of vessels has also been found in Shaki-Zagatala region [Казиев и др., 1969; Халилов, 1985] and in the territory of Agsu [Османов, 2006].

The surfaces of *basins* are decorated with scratches and carvings. On the inside of some basins, there are patterns of scratched lines extending

from the base toward the rim and wavy lines between them. Mostly, rim fragments of this type of vessels were found. From these fragments, it can be said that the basins were made relatively neatly and well-baked from clay mixed with fine sand. The basins found are usually light red in color.

Tools made of stone and iron and beads made of agate and paste were also found in the settlement.

The finds of Antiquity discovered in Poylu I settlement, especially ceramics, are generally identical to the materials of other contemporary sites of Caucasian Albania. From this point of view, the pottery vessels of Poylu I are important finds for the study of the history of Albanian pottery. Furthermore, comparative analysis shows that the main source of information for that period, i.e. archeological pottery materials have many similar technical and typological features with the ceramics of the previous period (Late Bronze-Early Iron Age) and are a continuation of the basic traditions of mass production. All these are material facts proving that there is a direct hereditary connection between the Khojaly-Gadabay culture of Azerbaijan and the Albanian period, and that the Albanian state is connected with the traditions of the previous stage. This connection is also observed in the main types of graves and burial customs prevalent in the region.

In Poylu I settlement, one catacomb-type grave dating to Antiquity was found and excavated (Fig. 3).

Grave No.1. The soil of the burial chamber was a mixture of gravel and sand. The dimension of the oval-shaped chamber was 1.45 m and its width was 1.25 m. The burial chamber was discovered at a depth of 1 m from the modern earth surface. The depth of the chamber itself was 35 cm. The dromos adjacent to the burial chamber from the north-east was 1 m in length and 90 cm in width. The person buried in the grave was a child. From the position of the skeleton, it was clear that the corpse had been laid in the burial chamber on its left side, slightly crouched, facing north [Nəcəfov, 2011, s.46-47].

In the east-west direction, three small river stones were placed around the skull of the buried corpse. Two obsidian stones were found on the top of the skull and one on the back. There were no traces of handiwork on the obsidian stones. Eight pottery vessels were found in the burial chamber (Fig. 4). Only one of them, a small crock, was intact. Others were cracked into different segments. The clay vessels consisted of a thin-walled bowl, a light-red pot coated with yellow engobe, a black three-legged oil lamp, a mug, a cup, a crock, a jug and a pitcher [Nəcəfov, 2006, s.11-12].

Tombs in Poylu II settlement. The archeological site is located in the plain to the east of the Poylu railway station, about 2.5 km south of the Kura River bed. The top and surrounding areas of the site have been used for planting for many years. Therefore, in the upper layers of the site,

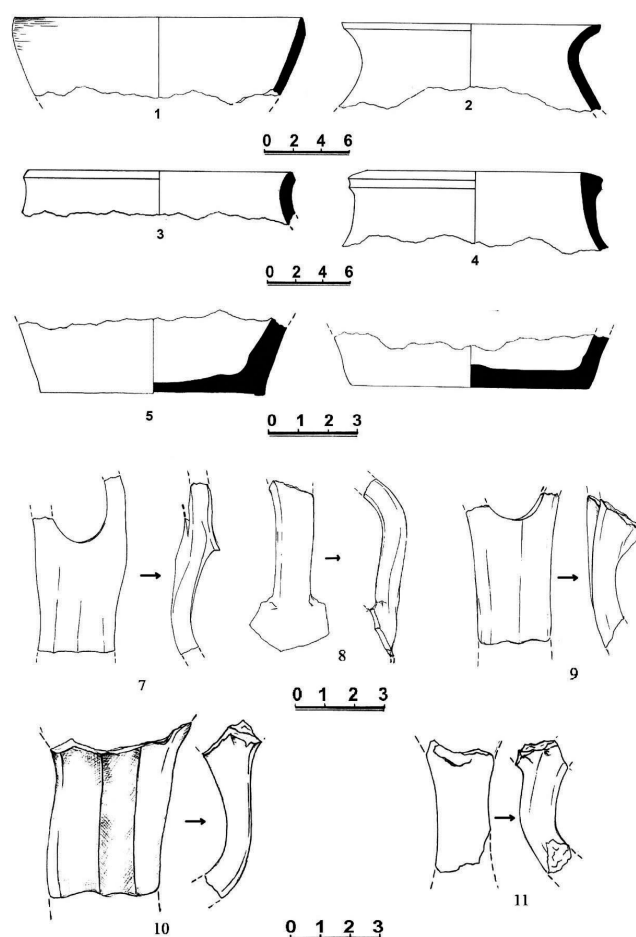


Fig. 2. Ceramics of Antiquity found in Poylu I settlement



Fig. 3. Poylu I: Catacomb No.1

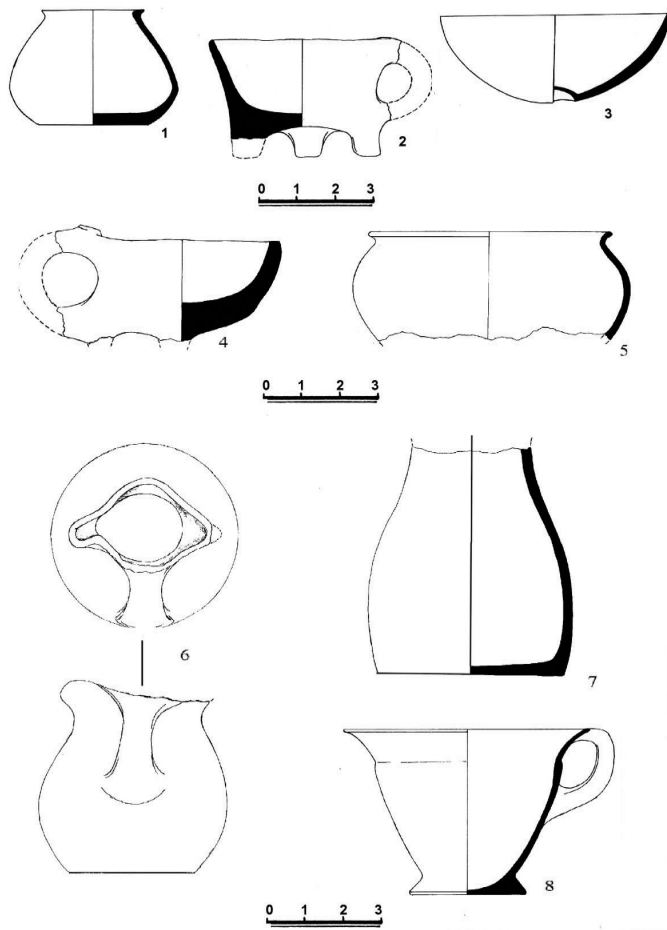


Fig. 4. Poylu I: Clay vessels found in catacomb No.1

archeological materials of different periods were found in a mixed form. The cultural layer of the site, which has no distinct surface features, is located below the modern earth surface [Müseyibli, 2008, s.6].

Judging by the distribution of surface materials, the area of the II Poylu settlement is about one hectare. The site was inhabited during Late Chalcolithic, Early Bronze, Late Bronze and Middle Ages. In addition, hanging graves and places of ritual burial of animals dating to Antiquity have been found in the cultural layers of the settlement. This article presents the graves studied by the author (N.Müseyibli).

Grave No.3. The grave was found at a depth of 1.4 m in the center of the 7th square (Fig. 5). The chamber of the catacomb-type grave was round in shape with a diameter of 1.4 m. The dromos adjacent to the burial chamber from the south-east is 1 m in length, 60 cm in width and 20 cm in depth. In the grave, the corpse was laid on its right side, head to the south and feet to the north, facing east, with its arms and legs folded. The head of the deceased was slightly deformed. A crock-type vessel was placed 20 cm east of the skeleton's knee (Fig. 6.1). The red crock was made from well-kneaded clay mixed with sand, well baked, and its rim sloped outward. It has a spherical shape and a wide flat base. There is a cross-shaped mark depicted on its shoulder before being baked [Müseyibli, 2008, s.8].

Grave No.4. The grave was found at the intersection of the 2nd and 3rd squares at the bottom of the northern wall of the excavation, at a depth of 1.8 m. Two clay vessels dating to Antiquity were found in the burial chamber. They were found lying sidewise. The

ribbon-shaped handle of the brown jug-type vessel connects the rim with the shoulder (Fig. 6.2). The rim has a spout. The vessel has a spherical body and a flat base. The reddish-brown jug-type vessel has a short neck, a convex body, and a flat base (Fig. 6.3). The handle of the jug goes slightly above the rim. No other materials were found in the burial chamber. It was not possible to determine the boundaries of the burial chamber due to the influence of groundwater at the indicated depth. The place where these vessels were discovered, most likely, was only part of the tomb of Antiquity that coincided with the excavation site [Müseyibli, 2008, s.8-9].

In addition to earthen graves, places of ritual burial of animals dating to Antiquity were also found in Poylu II settlement.

Both Poylu I and Poylu II sites are multi-layered. The age of the sites was determined based on the results of a comparative and radiocarbon analysis of the archeological complex as a whole and the remains of material culture. First of all, it is necessary to find out the age of the graves.

It should be noted that the archeological materials found in these sites, especially ceramics, retain a number of features characteristic of the mid–1st millennium BC. These are mostly small crocks of dark gray or black

color. Some of them have bulging protrusions on their bodies. Such vessels are typical for Azerbaijan's archeological sites of this period. The vast majority of pottery found in the cultural layer of Poylu I settlement were made more crudely and lack neatness. However, as already mentioned, some fragments found in some squares, especially in farm wells, belong to thin-walled vessels of very fine workmanship.

In the periods both before and after Antiquity, pottery wheels were widely used in the region. During Antiquity, in the neighboring countries of Albania, pottery wheels were also used to make clay vessels. As we know, Caucasian Albanian clay vessels of Antiquity were made by hand without using a pottery wheel. In Antiquity, it was the non-use of pottery wheels that was considered the main feature of Caucasian Albanian pottery. However, some of the ceramics of Antiquity found in southern provinces of the country, at Garakobar site in Agjabadi district and at Alikemek Tepesi site in Jalilabad district were made on a pottery wheel [Müseymbli və b., 2012, s.186]. Of the sites located in the central provinces of Albania, only in Gabala, a few fragments of wheel-made vessels were discovered during excavations carried out by I.A. Babayev in the Hellenic stratum [Бабаяев, 1990, с.136]. This difference can be explained by the local and regional characteristics of the pottery art and relations with neighboring countries [Müseymbli, Axundova, 2007, s.60].

The closest analogs of ceramics found both in the settlement and in the graves are encountered in the monuments of Yaloylutepe, Mingachevir, Gabala, Jafarkhan and others of Azerbaijan [Пассек, 1946; Исмизаде, 1956; Qaziyev, 1960; Халилов, 1985; Osmanov, 2006].

Most likely, in this site, the necropolis in Poylu I settlement dating to the 3rd–1st centuries BC was covered by the cultural layer of a nearby settlement belonging to the same necropolis, which was formed and expanded in the 1st century BC–3rd century AD. The central part of the settlement, which has an ancient layer and is directly connected with the graves, is probably located to the south and south-west of the present excavation site.

Archeological excavations carried out in Ganja-Gazakh region in connection with the BTC and SCP construction projects have played an important role in the discovery and excavation of earthen graves and jar burials. Previously, information about tombs of Antiquity in the region was very superficial and random, but as a result of these excavations, rich factual field materials have been collected. The ancient tombs of Poylu I and II belong to the Yaloylutepe culture. These tombs have a number of similarities with and some differences from the analogous monuments of the Yaloylutepe culture.

In Poylu I, the tombs of Early Antiquity were covered with a settlement layer belonging to a somewhat later stage of Antiquity. A similar situation was also observed in two other contemporary sites. In Khinisli, as a result of the displacement of a settlement dating to the late 2nd century



Fig. 5. Catacomb No.3 in Poylu II

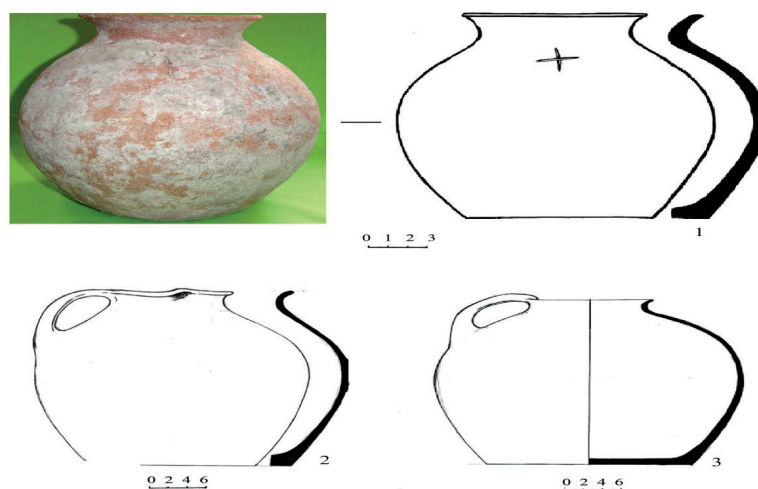


Fig. 6. Clay vessels found in Poylu II: 1–Catacomb No.3, 2-3- Grave No.4

AD, its cultural layer covered an older settlement dating to the 4th–3rd centuries BC and tombs dating to the 2nd century BC–2nd century AD [Xəlilov, 1965, s.83]. The same situation was noticed in another site of the Yaloylutepe culture, i.e. Aghyazi site located in Zagatala district. F.Mahmudov attributed the tombs in this site to the 1st century BC and the settlement layer covering these tombs to the 1st century AD [Mahmudov, 1965, s.138, 140]. However, due to the peculiarities of ceramics, the Aghyazi tombs can be attributed to a more ancient stage of the Yaloylutepe culture.

These facts indicate that, in contrast to the previous historical stage, the cemeteries of the Yaloylutepe culture were built in the immediate vicinity of settlements. After an interval of 50–100 years, as a result of the expansion of the settlement, the cultural layer blanketed some of the tombs.

Radiocarbon analysis of animal bones taken from a pit, in which animals of Antiquity were buried for ritual purposes in Poylu II settlement, showed that they date from the 1st–3rd centuries AD (Table 1).

The finds from the tombs of Antiquity of Poylu I and II have similarities to the materials of earthen tombs located in Nuydu [Osmanov, 2006, s.46–52], Yaloylutepe [Шарифов, 1927; Исмизаде, 1956], Gabala [Казиев и др., 1969, с.376–378], Shakili [Osmanov, 1970, s.21–25], Aghyazi [Mahmudov, 1965, s.131–144], Shamakhi [Xəlilov, 1961, s.31–47], Jafarkhan [Пасек, 1946], Borsunlu [Qoşqarlı və b., 2003] and Alazan valley in Azerbaijan. Similar specimens are also typical of the tombs of Antiquity

located in Shaki-Zagatala region. Another region that can be mentioned for the close similarity of the remains of material culture is Mingachevir with its jar burial materials [Qaziyev, 1960]. These analogies and similar specimens reflect the economic, cultural, territorial, and, most likely, communicative unity of the indigenous people of a certain ethnic makeup [Osmanov, 2006, s.51].

As we can see, the catacomb-type tombs of Antiquity have been studied in Poylu I and II. Such tombs had a particular place in the burial customs of the populations of different regions of Eurasia in different historical periods. Their structure was different in each region and historical period. As for the distribution area of catacombs in the Middle East and the Caucasus, it can be briefly noted that the oldest catacombs date back to the 6th–5th millennia BC and were built in Mesopotamia [Мернерт, Мунчаев, 1982].

The oldest catacomb in Azerbaijan was discovered in the lower layer of the Galayeri settlement in Gabala district, which dates to the 4th millennium BC. In this tomb, a 4–5-year-old child was buried [Museibli, 2016]. Catacombs from the period between this date and the early centuries of the 1st millennium BC have not been found in the territory of Azerbaijan. In the territories of Dagestan along the Caspian Sea coast, numerous catacombs dating to the period between the Bronze Age and the 3rd–2nd millennia BC have been explored [Маромедов, 2000].

In addition to typological differences, there were no geographical, chronological or cultural connections between all these Chalcolithic-Bronze

Table 1

Site	Context	Laboratory No	Measured Radiocarbon Age	$^{13}\text{C}/^{12}\text{C}$ Ratio	Conventional Radiocarbon Age	Material	2 sigma 95% probability	1 sigma 68% probability
KP 408.8	Kv 5. Charcoal	Beta 226241	1930+/-40 BP	-24.4 o/oo	1940+/-40 BP	Charcoal	Cal BC 30 to Cal AD 130	Cal AD 20 to 90
KP 408.8	Kv 4. Pit 2. Animal skeleton	Beta 220998	1760+/-40 BP	-18.2 o/oo	1870+/-40 BP	Bone	Cal AD 60 to Cal AD 240	Cal AD 90 to 220

Age catacombs. Furthermore, all these catacombs had no connection to the regional custom of Antiquity of burying in catacombs.

In the second half of the 1st millennium BC, the custom of burying in catacombs was the main burial custom of the Sarmatian-Alanian tribes in the North Caucasus. These tribes spread to the North Caucasus from the Southern Urals and Volga region [Смирнов, 1975].

In Azerbaijan, catacombs were part of the burial customs in the Late Antiquity-Early Middle Ages (1st–7th centuries). Such tombs (more than 200) are known mainly from the Mingachevir excavations carried out in 1946–1953. In subsequent years, catacombs were also found in Gakh, Gazakh and Gusar districts. The Gusar catacombs and some of the Mingachevir catacombs date back to the Early Middle Ages. Five catacombs of Antiquity have been explored in Gakh and only one in Gazakh. Therefore, the study focuses mainly on the Mingachevir catacombs [Гошгарлы, 2012, с.82-84].

The Mingachevir catacombs belonging to the first stage, Antiquity, have long narrow dromoi and dome-shaped roofs. The floors of the burial chambers were made elliptical, oval or rectangular, and the ceilings were dome-shaped [Гошгарлы, 2012, с.84]. The catacombs that we examined in Poylu also belong to the first stage of the spread of such tombs in Azerbaijan, i.e. the early centuries of our era, and are similar in structure to the Mingachevir catacombs of the same period.

In the Mingachevir catacombs and other similar tombs belonging to the early stage, one or, in rare cases, several corpses were buried. The corpses were laid on their sides in a crouched position or on their backs. Burials in the catacombs were performed in jars, on wooden floors, as well as on floors made of raw or baked bricks. In the catacomb of Babadervish settlement in Gazakh region, a rectangular pavement was built from clay for the burial of the deceased [Qaziyev, 1953, s.18; Əliyev, 1969, s.54-55; Гошгарлы, 2012, с.84-85]. However, no floors for the burial of the dead were found in the Poylu catacombs.

Another point that draws attention is the artificial deformation of the skulls of a group of people buried in the catacombs. Burials of such deformed skulls appeared in the South Caucasus – Georgia and Azerbaijan – in the early centuries

of our era and were also characteristic of the Mingachevir catacombs. Deformation of skulls was considered an ethnic characteristic of the Alanian tribes, who at that time lived near this region, on the passes of the Greater Caucasus and in the adjacent territories [Алиев, Асланов, 1975, с.74; Гошгарлы 2012, с.85]. It should also be noted that all of the normal and deformed skulls in the Mingachevir catacombs were dolichocranic and correspond to the local anthropological types that were common in the South Caucasus since more ancient times [Касимова, 1960, с.61, 85].

In Poylu catacomb No.3, too, a person with a slightly deformed skull was buried. This skull was also dolichocranic.

One of the main questions concerning catacombs is how and from where this type of tombs and burial custom spread to Azerbaijan. Although there is no consensus on this matter, no author has denied that the custom of burying in this type of tomb had come to the territory of Azerbaijan from outside. I.Aliyev, along with G.Aslanov, writes that the Mingachevir catacombs belonged to the Sarmatian–Alanian, more precisely the Alanian tribes, who campaigned south from the North Caucasus at the beginning of our era. The authors base their opinions on the information from written sources about the campaigns of these tribes, the typological structure of the Mingachevir catacombs, burial rules, archeological finds and anthropological factors [Алиев, Асланов, 1975].

Disagreeing with their opinion, J.Khalilov writes that catacombs entered Azerbaijan from the south. According to him, burials in Mingachevir catacombs were carried out in jars and on wooden floors in accordance with local Albanian customs, and the grave goods of these tombs are also local products. The practice of burying in catacombs that arrived in Albania became one of the burial customs of the aborigines of this territory. According to the researcher, the discovery of finds associated with this “imported custom” is the result of cultural and economic relations of the Albanian population [Халилов, 1985, с.101-103].

I.Babayev believes that even if the ancient catacombs of Mingachevir had belonged to the Alans, they were very strongly assimilated. Burial forms in these catacombs – in jars or on wooden floors in a crouched position – are alien to purely

Sarmatian burials. Sarmatian-Alanian elements are more vividly reflected in the Mingachevir catacombs of the later period, i.e. the 4th–7th centuries [Бабаев, 1990, с.117].

G.Goshgarli has analyzed and summarized the results of all studies of the catacombs. The researcher rightly disagrees with the idea that the custom of burial in catacombs was brought from the south. The absence of such graves in Nakhchivan or in the southern part of the country, the discovery of ancient catacombs only in the Kura basin, the peculiarities of burial customs and archeological materials in the graves show that the opinions about this practice being imported from the south are unfounded. G.Goshgarli carefully analyzed both the data of written sources and the remains of material culture, typological features of catacombs and archeological materials, and substantiated that there is no alternative to the fact that this burial

custom was brought by the Sarmatian-Alanian tribes who flocked to Albania from the north. The author rightly notes that when analyzing the ethnic origin of these tombs, one should not take into account only military campaigns. Because it would be impossible for the participants of military campaigns to create tombs with such a complex design, which would take a long time to build. Thus, one can talk about people who had been living here for a long time [Гoшгapлы, 2012, с.114-119].

We share these views and only add that one must not overlook the fact that the catacomb-type tombs brought to Albania by the Sarmatian tribes gradually acquired local features and became one of the local burial customs, albeit only in some territories areas of Albania. Catacombs excavated in Poylu also slightly improved the database on burial customs and the distribution of such tombs of Antiquity in Azerbaijan.

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Akhundova Gulnara

*Leading Research Fellow of the Field Research Sector of the Institute of Archaeology,
Ethnography and Anthropology of ANAS, PhD in History, Associate Professor*

ITEMS OF DECORATION IN THE CONTEXT OF CULTURAL AND ECONOMIC TIES OF CAUCASIAN ALBANIA

Since ancient times, international relations have played a large part in familiarizing peoples and states with each other. Thanks to these ties, nations got acquainted with the achievements of each other in various fields of economy and culture and borrowed all progressive things from each other.

The favorable geographic position of the South Caucasus, including the ancient Azerbaijani state Caucasian Albania, its economic development and natural resources, and the proximity of this region to the centers of ancient Oriental culture contributed to the emergence of its ties with other countries. After Alexander the Great's campaign to the East, the trade, economic and cultural ties between states expanded even more. The penetration of Hellenistic culture into the countries of the East started with him. It had a positive impact on the development and expansion of Albania's trade relations with other countries.

Archaeological excavations revealed that Albania maintained relations with almost all cultural centers of the Hellenistic world. These relations are evidenced by both written sources and many cultural artifacts, in addition to numismatic materials.

The archaeological excavations in Qabala have showed that seals from the countries of the Hellenistic world were used here. Dozens of bullas from Qabala in the layers of the Hellenistic period bear impressions of seals made by Greek craftsmen in the centers of Hellenistic culture. They bear images of Hercules, various animals, and plants [Бабаев, 1990, с.171]. A significant part of the clay impressions were made by imported signet rings. This means that the rings with images were not just jewelry or amulets, but seals – signs of ownership.

The ties of Albania in antiquity are also evidenced by two signet rings found in Mingachevir and Shamakhi. The seal on the Mingachevir ring depicts a young satyr standing and drinking from

a cup, with a thyrsus on his shoulder. The ring is assumed to have an image of an antique statue. The ancient Shamakhi ring has images of a dolphin, crawfish, anchor and algae in a dotted rim [Халилов, 1985, с.157].

In Shamakhi [Халилов, 1985, с.141] and the monuments of Ismayilli district [Османов, 1995, с.44], rings with a spiral bezel were found (Fig. 1.8-11). These rings bear the seal of ancient Greek traditions, where the spiral motif was widespread in jewelry and household items [Кругликова, 1969, с.115-116].

The trade relations of Albania with the Middle East countries in the Hellenistic era are evidenced by fragments of various glass and glazed vessels of Syrian origin [Халилиев, 1985, с.129; Бабаев, 1990, с.171]. As is known, Syria at that time was one of the centers of glass production in the antique world. Glass beads of Syrian origin were found during excavations of almost all Albanian monuments of antiquity. In particular, such beads have been found in large quantities in Mingachevir, Yaloylutepe, Khynysli and Dagestan [Карахмедова, 1978, с.14-15].

In early jar burials of Mingachevir, scarabs brought from Egypt were found. They were made from a pale green Egyptian paste and had images on their flat bases. Scarabs were considered sacred in ancient Egypt and served as amulets. However, scarabs were in use not only in Egypt; the Phoenicians counterfeited and sold them. [Казиев, 1949, с.82]. According to B.B.Piotrovsky, scarabs came to Transcaucasia through Western Asia in various ways [Пiotровский, 1958, с.22-23]. A.A.Karakhmedova believes that goods from Syria, Egypt and Mesopotamia penetrated into Albania via the so-called «royal road» which crossed the territory of Iran as early as under the Achaemenids [Карахмедова, 1978, с.11]. Herodotus also provides

information about this path [Геродот, 1972, I, 104]. One of the routes leading from Achaemenid Iran to the north went along the western coast of the Caspian Sea.

Caucasian Albania maintained trade, economic and cultural ties with Western Asian countries. Ties with Iran were especially flourishing. Albania's

close and extensive contacts with Iran led local craftsmen to borrow some of the product forms that existed in Iran. Thus, bracelets with a bend in the middle, twisted torcs and lunula earrings found in the Hellenistic monuments of Albania have a certain similarity with Iranian products [Бабаев, Гусейнова, 1979, с.12-13]. The custom of wearing metal torcs as decorations comes from the West Asia and became widespread in Achaemenid Iran.

In the earthen graves of Mingachevir [Казиев, 1949, с.28, рис. 19] containing stretched and slightly twisted skeletons, bronze cast signet rings were found. Some of them had been brought from Iran and some were locally made. Various animals were depicted on the bezels of these rings. They were presented in various postures – standing, walking, running. One of them shows a deer chased by a lion. Some rings bear human images. There is a ring with a man fighting with a lion who is attacking him. The man is dressed in a long Persian caftan [Асланов, Бабаев, 1965, с.95].

Similar themes are found on the bronze belts of the early 1st millennium BC. The bezel of another ring has a man on a galloping horse. There are also rings depicting fantastic creatures. One of them has an image of a winged monster with a lion's head and a fish's tail. Another ring has a deer with two heads - a lion's and a deer's [Асланов, Бабаев, 1965, с.95, табл. II, 1, 10]. All this indicates that the manufacturers and owners

of these rings were familiar with Persian mythology and used these motifs in jewelry.

Products imported into Albania also served as models. Based on them, artisans produced all kinds of similar jewelry and glyptic items. Local production of these items is evidenced in a number of cases by the presence of semi-finished and defective products. Both imported products and local replicas testified to the trade, economic and cultural ties of Albania with the antique world.

Albans also used scarabaeoid-shaped beads. They are known from Mingachevir and are made of hydrated form of silicon and yellowish-white calcite [Голубкина, 1956, с.82]. They have very schematic images, which are completely indistinguishable in some artifacts (Fig. 1.1). These scarabaeoids had a flat-convex shape of a regular circle, borrowed from

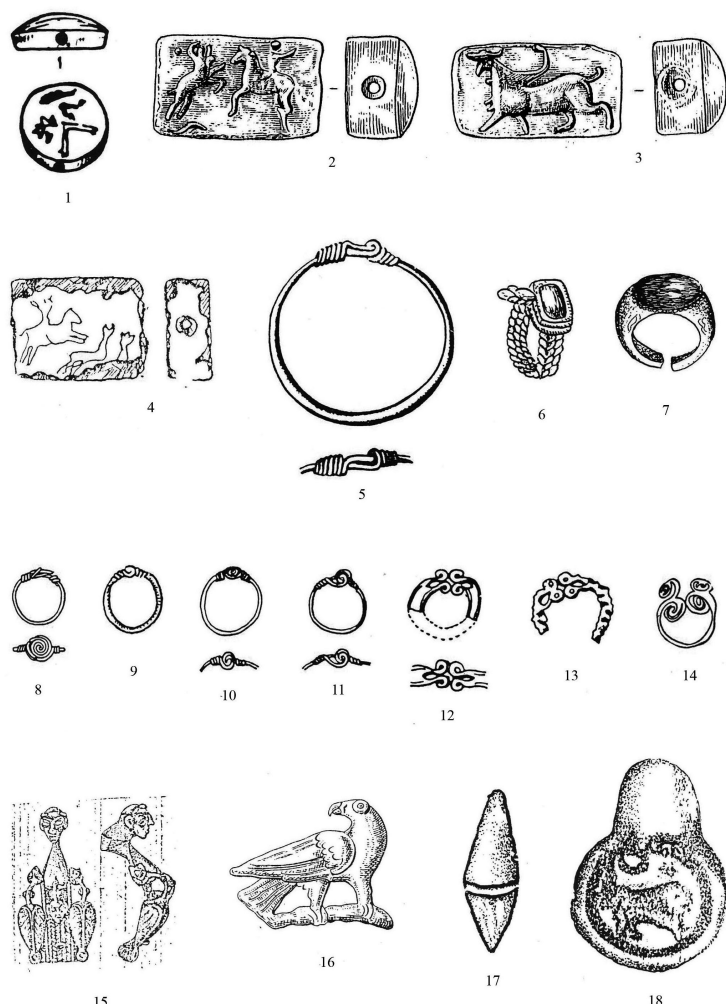


Fig. 1.

Phoenicia [Голубкина, Расулова, 1966, с.78]. I.A.Babaev considers these scarabaeoids to be local products [Асланов, Бабаев, 1965, с.96-97], but their shape is an imitation of the scarabaeoid of ancient Egypt, Phoenicia and Asia Minor [Голубкина, Расулова, 1966, с.75].

During the Hellenistic era, Albania maintained close trade and economic ties with the neighboring Georgia. The close relationship between Albania and Georgia is evidenced by the similarity between the archaeological materials. M.I.Maksimova, who studied the glyptic monuments of Georgia, believed that Iberia was one of the centers of glass seals production [Максимова, 1941, с.91-92]. Three multifaceted glass seals were found in the monuments of Albania [Бабаев, 1965, с.128-133]. They were parallelepipedal. One of them bears a scene of a fight between a rider and a centaur (Fig. 1.2), the second shows a horseback hunt for fallow deer or gazelles escaping from the rider (Fig. 1.4), and the third depicts a bird-headed winged griffin (Fig. 1.3). The images on the first two polyhedra exactly copy the Georgian ones. I.A.Babaev believes that the Mingachevir and Georgian polyhedra were made in the same workshop in Iberia [Асланов, Бабаев, 1965, с.99]. In Georgia, such blue glass polyhedra are found in large numbers [Максимова, 1941, с.91-92].

In the Hellenistic era, the North Caucasus played an important role in trade and economic relations of Albania. The North Caucasus was closely related to many countries by convenient trade routes. One of the busiest transit trade routes ran along the western coast of the Caspian Sea via Derbent.

The North Caucasus was populated by numerous ethnic groups. In the 4th century BC, the Sarmatians settled here and began showing up at the borders of the South Caucasus [Виноградов, 1963, с.139]. The Sarmatian tribes with their great military power quickly established economic ties with neighboring peoples, including the Albanians. These ties can be traced by archaeological materials. Thus, chalk and sulfur beads were found in Mingachevir jar burials of the 4th–3rd centuries BC [Казиев, Голубкина, 1949, с.76, 81]. It is known that the Sauromats and Sarmatians used chalk beads, chalk and sulfur sprinkles in their funeral rites [Алексеева, 1976, с.14-16]. This gave grounds to some researchers to say that Mingachevir jar burials of the

2nd-1st centuries BC carry pronounced Sarmatian features [Карахмедова, 1978, с.12-13]. Some elements, e.g. burial with a horse, a ritual associated with fire and abundance of weapons, bring some graves closer to the burials of the Sarmatian type, which were widespread at that time in the North Caucasus and are not infrequent in the northern outskirts of Caucasian Albania.

Starting from the 1st century BC, Albania's ties with the North Caucasus expanded even more. At this time, the Sarmatian tribes of Aorsi and Siraces settled in the North Caucasus. The presence of the Aorsi is observed in the coastal regions of the North-Western Caspian region [Виноградов, 1963, с.142; Давудов, 1996, с.128]. The Aorsi tribes living in the neighborhood of the Albanians played a major role in international trade. Thus, Strabo notes that «/the Aorsi living in the northern Caspian region/ ...carried out camel caravan trade in Indian and Babylonian goods, receiving them in exchange from the Armenians and the Medes» [Алиев, 1987, с.23]. Most researchers identify the Aorsi trade road with the Caspian region through the Derbent Pass [Давудов, 1996, с.131].

During the Hellenistic period, Albania maintained ties with Central Asia and India. Many beads found in the North Caucasus and Transcaucasia date back to the 2nd century BC and are of Irano-Indian origin [Леммлейн, 1950, с.158]. Archaeologic excavations have revealed a large number of cowrie shells, which are native to the Indian and Pacific coasts. Since ancient times, they have been used not only as jewelry and amulets, but also as money [Пахомов, 1959, с.4]. Coral beads and mother-of-pearl pendants found in the monuments of Caucasian Albania were also brought from the Indian and Pacific Oceans, since neither corals nor sea shells, from which mother-of-pearl is extracted, are found in water bodies of Albania or Transcaucasia [Голубкина, Расулова, 1966, с.76].

In all likelihood, contacts with Central Asia and India were maintained by the waterway mentioned by Strabo. He wrote that many Indian goods were brought downstream the Oxus (Amu Darya) to the Hyrcanian (Caspian) Sea; from there, they were transported to «Albania and across the Kir River and the following areas were then delivered to the Euxine Pontus» [Алиев, 1987, с.24].

In 2nd–1st centuries BC, the Roman state, having consolidated its power in the west, started its

the invasive actions of Rome also affected the South Caucasus, including Albania. Rome sought to seize expansion to the East. The political situation that arose in the Middle East in connection with the South Caucasus and the trade routes passing through this region, which connected the West with the East.

In 69 BC, the Romans marched to the South Caucasus. Since that time, Albania, like the entire South Caucasus, has been in the sphere of influence of Rome. This created favorable conditions for building economic and cultural ties of Albania with the Roman world, and until the beginning of the 3rd century, there were constant contacts between these countries. This is confirmed by a large number of imported Roman products in the monuments of Caucasian Albania. These ties are also evidenced by a series of Roman coins from Gabala [Алиев, Гадиров, 1985, с.28].

Among the imported Roman decorations, fibulae held a prominent place. Most of them were plate-type fibulae covered with multi-colored enamel. They were found in earthen graves, jar burials, timber graves and early catacombs in Mingachevir, Shamakhi and Gabala. It has been established that plate-type brooches are of Gallo-Roman origin, and the discovery of them in relatively large numbers in the North Caucasus shows that they came to Albania through the North Caucasus [Халилов, 1980, с.85].

A hinged fibula with its plate in the form of an eagle sitting on a branch with its head turned back was found in an earthen grave in Shamakhi [Халилов, 1985, с.146-147]. This brooch was cast in bronze and covered with gold foil (Fig. 1.16). Such brooches are attributed to the art of the Roman provinces and are found in fairly large numbers in the antique cities of the Northern Black Sea region, as well as in Central Europe [Амброз, 1966, с.36]. The crossbow fibulae known from the sites of Caucasian Albania are also of Roman origin.

A very interesting gold ring was found in an earthen grave in Shamakhi; the shank of the ring consists of three independent bars, two outer ones of which are twisted wires and the middle one has notches on the surface. A heart-shaped basket is soldered to the shank. The basket is made of a thin plate and bordered with threaded wire. The stone of this ring is combined: the upper part is amethyst, and the lower one is turquoise (Fig. 1.6). This ring is believed to have been imported from Rome [Халилов, 1985, с.142]. This is also indicated by

other jewelry found in this grave: a crossbow fibula, a brooch with multi-colored enamel, a gold bracelet with thickened ends, and gold lunula earrings with a hinged clasp [Ахундова, 2020, с.135].

In the earthen graves of Yaloylutepe and the catacombs of Mingachevir, red gold lunular earrings were found [Асланов, Голубкина, Садыхзаде, 1966, с.18-19]. Four grains were soldered to them, arranged in a pyramid shape (Fig. 2.1, 3). They are similar to Roman products [Литвинский, 1973, с.41]. Earrings of this type are typical of antiquity. Having studied this type of earrings, A.A.Karakhmedova came to the conclusion that they had come to Albania through trade with Rome [Карахмедова, 1974, с.274]. After the 3rd century, they are not found in the monuments of Albania. Their wide distribution falls precisely within the Roman period. But there is no doubt that along with the imported samples, there was also local manufacture, as evidenced by silver and bronze items found in Mingachevir catacombs of the 1st–3rd centuries [Карахмедова, 1975, с.74].

In the jar burial of Qalagah, Ismayilli region, a pair of gold boat-shaped earrings was found [Пахомов, 1939, с.71, фиг.1]. The surface of the earrings was decorated with fine grainulation and ten red stones of various sizes and shapes (round, oval, triangular, quadrangular). In the upper part of the earrings, two small gold rings were soldered opposite each other for threading the hook. A gold tube with four small bunches of grapes was soldered to the bottom of the earrings (Fig. 2.6). The manufacturing techniques, i.e. granulation, arrangement of stones and making of baskets for stones from narrow gold plates and the fine workmanship are characteristic of the Roman provinces, which suggests that the items are imports.

As noted above, imported products were used as models. Local craftsmen used them to produce similar jewelry. Thus, there are two more pairs of gold earrings of the same shape, but of a rougher and less exquisite workmanship [Osmanov, 1982, s.100]. They have also been found in Qalagah at different times, on plowed land. The surface of these earrings is decorated with seven stones, the grains are larger and lost in many spots, and the bottom part is missing (Fig. 2.7). It is possible that these earrings were made by local artisans.

The gold earrings, found in the catacomb of Torpaggala, Qakh district, consist of four triangular plates with red stones [Aslanov, 1961, с.40, tabl. IV, 1-2]. The earrings taper downward, forming

a pyramid. In the upper part of the earrings there are paired loops to insert the hook (Fig. 2.5). These earrings had been made using the same techniques as the previous ones. The fine and exquisite workmanship gives grounds for classifying them as Roman imports. This assumption becomes even more probable if we take into account another item found in this grave. It was a silver vase with a scene on its bottom showing a deer being torn apart by a griffin, attributed by G.O.Goshgarly to the Roman import [Кошкарлы, 1985, с.48-53].

Among the imported items, there are also two pairs of horseshoe-shaped earrings found in the timber graves of Mingachevir [Асланов, Голубкина, Садыхзаде, 1966, табл. II, 5, 6]. One pair of the earrings was made of two soldered gold plates with two pairs of loops at the top, in which we see remains of a hook. The earrings have three red stones of different sizes and shapes. The base of the basket was decorated with fine grains (Fig. 2.2). The other pair of earrings with the same shape had two oval lilac glass stones. The bottom part of the earrings was decorated with a golden tube, to which four grains arranged in a pyramid shape were soldered, which were themselves finished with two shapes of grape bunches, each consisting of four small grains (Fig. 2.4).

Thus, all the earrings noted above, despite the difference in shape, have a lot in common. The surface of these earrings was decorated with inlays of stones and glass, the techniques of soldering, grain and filigree were applied, and the baskets of stones were made of narrow gold plates. All these techniques were characteristic of the Roman provinces, which gives grounds for classifying them as Roman imports.

Imported Roman items also include numerous glyptic items represented by carved stones and glass cameos with engraved images, which were inserted into the bezels of rings. The overwhelming majority of them were found during archaeological excavations in Mingachevir, and the rest in Khynysli, Torpaggala, Gabala and Ganja. Antique gems of the Roman era normally have the images of antique gods on them: the war god Ares, the sun god Helios, the king of gods Zeus, the fate goddess Tyche, and the goddess of love and beauty Aphrodite. The gods are depicted in statuary postures with their characteristic attributes. Among the gems from Albania, there are also those with images of dancing women, poppies, ears, animals. One of the gems bears an image of an altar with tongues of flame [Асланов, Бабаев, 1965, с.98; Халилов, 1985, с.158]. An interesting cameo with an image of handshake was found in Ganja and Mingachevir [Гуммель, 1940, с.156-159; Халилов, 1985, с.158]. In Roman times, this image symbolized wedlock [Максимова, 1950, с.230]. A bronze ring with Greek

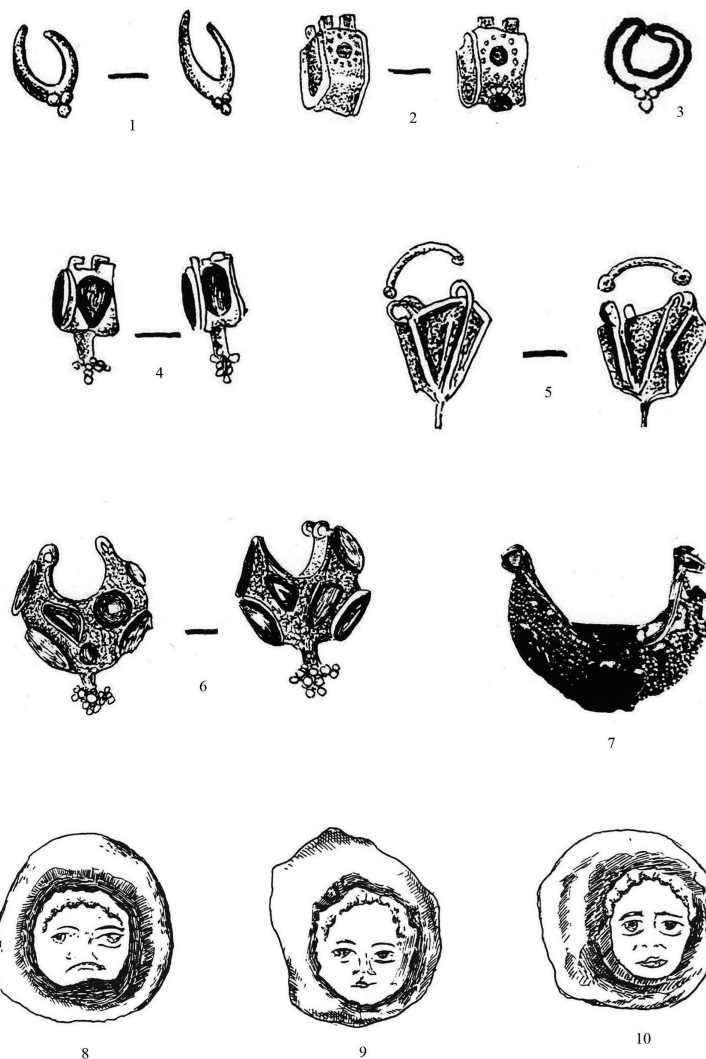


Fig. 2.

letters was found in a catacomb of Mingachevir [Пасулова, 2008, с.162]. It is believed that the rings with inscriptions contained good wishes. Such rings with inscriptions are often found among the Roman glyptic monuments [Халилов, 1985, с.158].

According to I.A.Babaev's assumption, gems with antique themes were also made in Albania [Бабаев, 1965, с.127], as was the case in neighboring Georgia [Рамишвили, 1978, с.112], but they can hardly be distinguished from imported ones. But, nevertheless, there have been attempts to distinguish local intaglios. Thus, Albanian masters of antiquity made signet rings which most often had images of various animals on them [Халилов, 1985, с.159]. But the percentage of imported gems is extremely high. The works of Roman and other masters of ancient Italy are often impossible to distinguish from the products of neighboring crafts centers, since the outlands copied the Roman standard in style and theme. But, nevertheless, the signet rings with various antique themes, found in the monuments of Albania, testified to the trade and economic relations of Albania with Rome and its provinces, and the manufacture of signet rings, similar to antique ones, by local craftsmen evidenced the influence of the antique world on the local culture.

In Roman times, the economic relations of Albania with Syria and Egypt were growing. Among the imported items, all kinds of beads, necklaces and pendants stand out for their massiveness and breadth of chronological periods. A large number of glass beads of different colors, shapes and sizes have been found in the monuments of Albania. Among the glass beads found, there are those with internal gilding, spherical, barrel-shaped, rhombic, pyramidal, in the form of barley grains, heart-shaped, consisting of two flat-convex halves soldered together with their flat parts, warty, and eye beads. Making beads with internal gilding was quite difficult; it was possible only in centers with developed glassmaking technology and required knowledge of both various methods of glass processing and jewelry. The tradition of gilding beads began in the 4th century BC in Egypt, and this technique became widespread in the Roman period. «Blue and dark colored beads were made in the Phoenician cities of Tyre and Sidon, and multicolored beads including warty and eyed ones, in Thebes and other cities of Egypt...», from where they got to Albania [Голубкина, Расулова, 1966, с.73-74].

Archaeological excavations in Azerbaijan have revealed various kinds of pendants made of Egyptian paste, which were widespread in Roman times. A figurine of a dove and a button made of Egyptian blue paste were found in one jar burial in Mingachevir [Пасулова, 1973, с.70]. The items made of this material also included various amulets like rounded-ribbed beads, amphora-shaped pendants, hamsa ornaments, pendants in the form of a human leg, a fig sign, a bunch of grapes, and a figurine of a goddess holding a child to her chest [Карахмедова, 1978, с.14-15]. Such Egyptian items have also been found in Dagestan in the Tarki and Karabudakhkent burial grounds of the early centuries of our era [Крупнов, 1951, с.217]. All kinds of pendants and ornaments made from Egyptian paste are considered the products of the large workshops of the Egyptian cities of Naucratis and Alexandria. It is also believed that they spread to Albania through the antique cities of the Black Sea region [Пиотровский, 1958, с.22-23].

In one of the jar burials of Mingachevir, very interesting amulets were found. These are paste beads with images of faces [Юне, 1955, с.58, рис. 22, 1-3]. These beads of yellowish, black and brown paste were made with the technique of threading and glass mosaic, which came from Egypt (Fig. 2. 8-10) [Сыманович, 1961 с.273]. Similar beads are known from the artifacts of Scythian Neapolis.

Archaeological finds show that during Roman times, Albania maintained economic ties with India as well. Thus, Indian carnelian beads inlaid with white and black paste were found in Mingachevir, Khynysli and Torpaggala. During archaeological excavations, beads were found that allow tracing the ties of Albania with India from the 1st century BC to the 3rd century AD. [Карахмедова, 1978, с.12].

In the Roman period, Parthia played an important role in Albania's trade relations. Thus, during archaeological excavations in Albania, a number of items of Parthian origin, including glyptic work, were found [Асланов, Бабаев, 1965, с.99]. The signet rings of the Parthian period bear images of fantastic creatures, women, plants and animals. Fantastic creatures were represented by a winged horse, Pegasus. These images are associated with ancient Iranian mythology. Parthian gems also have scorpion images. Scorpions were also depicted on Achaemenid reliefs. Among the plants on signet rings, images of tulips, poppies, lilies and trees

are often found. Plants were depicted in a stylized form [Асланов, Бабаев, 1965, с.99]. The trade ties between Albania and Parthia are evidenced by a silver brooch with a seated pregnant woman. The woman's figure consists of three birds that hold a human head in their beaks. The birds have a long neck, bulging eyes, a long beak and folded wings. The tail of the central bird ends with the woman's head. The woman has almond-shaped eyes, joined eyebrows, a large nose, a small open mouth and rather big ears (Fig. 1.15). A.A.Karakhmedova attributes this brooch to the Parthian time and sees in it features of the Greco-Parthian art [Карахмедова, Рагимова, с.98].

The trade relations between Albania and Parthia are evidenced by two disc-shaped and two amphora-shaped pendants from a Mingachevir catacomb (Fig. 1.17-18). The disc-shaped pendants are made of transparent yellow glass. One of them depicts a full face of a man, and the other – a lion walking to the left with a seven-pointed star over its head and a crescent above its back [Карахмедова, 1975, с.73]. The crescent and the star are the famous emblem of the Mithridates dynasty [Максимова, 1957, с.80]. These signs are also found on Arsacid coins [Пахомов, 1951, с.146]. Gems with these signs are also known in the Bosporus [Максимова, 1957, с.80].

Close trade and economic ties also existed between Albania and the cities of the Northern Black Sea region. Thus, a convex gold ring with an oval pink stone was found in Mingachevir [Асланов, Голубкина, Садыхзаде, 1966, с.55, табл. VII, 1]. Fine grains were soldered to the base of the bezel. In the widened part of the shank, on both sides, there is a stylized floral ornament (Fig. 1.7). Similar rings were found in large numbers in the necropolis of Chersonese [Пятышева, 1956, с.42, табл. VII, 12, 13]. Among the items found in Albanian sites, there are rings with two curls at ends [Халилов, 1985, с.141, табл. XXXI, 14, 15], which were widespread in the first centuries in the cities of the Northern Black Sea region (Fig. 1.12-14) [Кругликова, 1969, с.116]. Bronze bracelets made of round wire, with spirally ends tied to the hook, were found in the sites of Albania [Халилов, 1985, с.140, табл. XXX, 4, 5]. Such bracelets became widespread in the Northern Black Sea region in the 2nd–1st centuries BC (Fig. 1.5). Fibulae and beads of Albania are also similar to the materials from the monuments of the Northern Black Sea region.

In Roman times, close trade and economic ties existed between Albania and the tribes of the North Caucasus. At this time, the Alanian tribes of the Sarmatian group dominated in the North Caucasus. In the 1st century, they settled in the central part of the North Caucasus, and then quickly established ties with the neighboring peoples. V.Kuznetsov noted that «along with relations with northern neighbors and Russia, the Caucasian Alans undoubtedly maintained relations with Georgia, Albania and Iran» [Кузнецов, 1962, с.40]. These ties are also evidenced by archaeological findings. I.Aliyev notes that «among the items of the Mingachevir catacombs, there are quite a lot of obviously Sarmato-Alan things. These include, first of all, typical Sarmatian belt buckles, which are round, semicircular, oval and quadrangular with a movable drop-down prong and a plate clip or without it. The belt sets from the Mingachevir catacombs, especially plaques, directly resemble those found in the burial grounds of the Sarmato-Alanian time» [Алиев, 1971, с.204]. In the sites of Albania, various bells are often found, used as pendants. Some researchers explain their wide spread in the catacomb time by the influence of the Alans, because decorating dresses and horses with ringing bells is «a phenomenon that is very common in the Alan environment and generally in the Alan period» [Кузнецов, 1962].

In the catacombs of Mingachevir, painted beads were found resembling those found in Ossetia and referred to as «Alanian». In one catacomb, a large round chalcedony bead was found, similar to those found in Alanian burials [Алиев, 1971, с.204].

In all likelihood, trade relations of Albania with the North Caucasus and the Bosporus state were supported by routes passing through the mountain passes of the Greater and Lesser Caucasus, as well as along the western coast of the Caspian Sea through the Derbent Pass.

Therefore, the decorations, along with other archaeological materials obtained from Azerbaijani monuments of antiquity, indicate close and regular ties of the ancient Caucasian Albanians with other tribes and peoples of the South Caucasus and the West Asia, with the North Caucasus, Ciscaucasia, the Volga region, the Northern Black Sea region and Eastern Europe, with Asia Minor, Syria, Egypt and the countries of the Aegean world.

The known samples of jewelry art give grounds to state that the art of Albania, based on ancient

local traditions, developed in close interaction with the surrounding civilizations and was inspired by the advanced artistic tastes of different peoples and eras.

Various contacts with highly developed cultural centers of that time, especially with the countries of the antique world, enriched the local culture and had a positive impact on all spheres of life of the local people. The antique influence can also be observed in jewelry, in the forms and techniques of making metal jewelry. Highly artistic imported products served as models. However, Albanian jewellery is characterized not so much by direct replication of identical works of the art of antiquity, but rather by re-envisioning of its general traditions and the birth of new techniques, elements and forms that differ from both traditional local and imported ones (for example, lunular earrings with a hook). The numerous earrings in the form of a bunch of grapes show the combination of ancient local traditions

with the modified traditions of antiquity introduced from the outside, contributing to new artistic forms that differ from both traditional local forms and the alien ones.

The influence of imported jewelry on the local complex was different in terms of the range of products. Different decorations are often found in different areas and cities. Sometimes they are unique. The imported jewelry was not evenly distributed among the urban population. Imported and, probably, more expensive jewelry could be used only by the nobility. It is no coincidence that they were mainly found in the graves of the rich. The upper strata of the society fell under foreign influence more easily and quickly, while the bulk of the people stuck to the traditional local art. Anyway, imported jewelry, having been brought to Albania in one way or another, became part of the material culture of the indigenous local population.

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Aliyev Tavakkul*Head of the Field Research Sector of the Institute of Archaeology,
Ethnography and Anthropology of ANAS, PhD in History, Associate Professor*

ALBANIAN CULTURAL HERITAGE IN THE NARGIZTEPE ARCHAEOLOGICAL COMPLEX

Located in Khojavend district, the Nargiztepe complex of archeological monuments occupies a special place among the material cultural monuments of Azerbaijan. The central monument of this complex, called “Nargiztepe Heights”, is located at the intersection of the foothills of the Karabakh mountain range with the Mil plain, 0.7 km south-east of the Honashen River, on a natural hill at an altitude of 217 m above sea level (Fig. 1). It has a height of 8 m, an area of about 1.3 ha and following coordinates: lat 39°51’46” N, long 47°12’38” N. As early as in the middle of the 20th century, A.A.Iessen, the head of the Azerbaijan (Orangala) expedition, recorded Nargiztepe as a multi-layered monument based on ceramic artifacts belonging to the Middle Bronze Age and the jar burial culture of Antiquity [Иесен, 1965, с.19]. The Nargiztepe Heights have long been strategically important (for 28 years between 1992-2020) as a portion of Upper Karabakh that remained under Azerbaijani control.

The Nargiztepe archeological monuments complex covers a large area with a diameter of about 5 km. Here, monuments of different periods are located side by side. They consist of defensive and civil buildings, settlements and various types of grave monuments (kurgans, stone box graves, earthen graves and jarburials). Rock fragments, round and heavy river stones, raw and baked bricks were used as construction materials. The building stones of earlier periods served as building material for the constructions of the later periods.

Exploration work around Nargiztepe has shown that there has been constant life in this area since the end of the Bronze Age. Here, the Late Bronze and Early Iron Ages are mainly characterized by defensive walls, including cyclopean structures, and samples of high-quality black-polished pottery. A fortress wall, whose visible part is more than

50 m long, was constructed by laying a row of large and unhewn stones and surrounded by a ditch and an earthwork. No bonding agent was used in the construction of the wall. Based on this feature, the remains of the wall are included among the classic cyclopean structures, which are known in Azerbaijan as “cyclopean fortresses” and are widespread in Nakhchivan, Western Azerbaijan, Gadabay, Dashkasan and other districts [Расулоглы, 1993]. It should be noted that this is the first time in recent years when the remains of such a fortification were discovered during research in the Mil-Karabakh region.

The ceramic ware of the early Albanian period (6th–4th centuries BC) is also distinguished by its quality. The surface of these well-baked utensils made of fine clay is smooth and polished. They are in many ways reminiscent of the Achaemenid pottery. The necropolis and stone box graves, which are spread over a large area, and the remains of stone and brick buildings testify to the vibrant life that existed around Nargiztepe in Antiquity and the early Middle Ages. Artifacts of material culture of this period, especially pottery, find their analogy in shape and pattern in other antique monuments of the Mil plain (Galatepe, Garakobar, Garakopektepe, etc.), as well as monuments on the left bank of the Kura, such as Yaloylutepe-type ceramics. This testifies to the formation of a unified Albanian culture in the vast areas from the North Caucasus to the Araz River, in the basin of the Kura and Araz rivers during this period.

In a large area south of Nargiztepe, traces of walls, remains of a perfect intricate structure made of large stones are observed. Built as two rows of large and round river stones and filled with pebbles and earth, these walls have survived mainly in their foundation part. During the initial studies, about 60 m of these one-meter-wide walls were cleaned and

unearthed. The thousands of heavy river stones used in their construction are believed to have been brought from the bed of the Honashen River, which flows about a kilometer away. However, at present such stones are not found in the riverbed. The pottery (Fig. 9) and glassware found around the walls during the clean-up work confirm that these building remains date back to the Early Middle Ages. Later, when these public buildings lost their significance, their stones were used for various purposes [Əliyev, İbrahimli, Əliyeva, 2015a, s.73]. For example, the medieval Muslim graves at the southern foot of Nargiztepe are surrounded by these stones in the form of cromlech.

In a medieval Turkic cemetery, which is locally called “Avshar cemetery” and is located in an area of about one hectare (150 m x 70 m) at the southern foot of Nargiztepe, more than 300 graves were registered. On the surfaces of some of these graves, there were signs, tamgas and carved patterns, which were also studied (Fig. 5). Several sarcophagi (tombstones) with drawings and epigraphic inscriptions attracted attention as a perfect example of art. Starting from the 13th–14th centuries, epigraphic inscriptions on the headstones were engraved in the Azerbaijani language in Arabic alphabet. Our fellow epigraphist, employee of the National Museum of History of Azerbaijan of ANAS Ms. Habiba Aliyeva has read the inscription engraved in Arabic alphabet on one of the sarcophagi. In that inscription, the name of the deceased, Ahmad oglu Huseyn bey, was mentioned, and the date of his death was indicated as 701AH (1302AD). This coincides with the reign of the Mongol Hulagu dynasty (Ilkhanate) in Azerbaijan [Əliyev, İbrahimli, Əliyeva, 2015b, s.120].

A story goes that many of the events described in the Dede Gorgud epics, especially the stories about the Garaja Choban (Shepherd Garaja), took place around Nargiztepe. The locals believe that the tomb located here on a separate hill belongs to the Garaja Choban, and the large round stones mentioned above are the shepherd’s petrified sheep. In general, the toponyms around Nargiztepe show that this area was the homeland of the ancient Oghuz Turks: a hero of the epic, Gazan khan, is called the “Panther of Garachug.” One of the heights of the Karabakh mountain range near Nargiztepe is also called “Garachug.” There is information about the existence of a village called Garachug in this area in the Middle Ages [Cəmsədiv, 1977, s.44-46; Qeybullayev, 1990, s.150].

Thus, on the one hand, toponyms of Turkic origin, and, on the other hand, the tombstones around Nargiztepe, as well as copper coins minted in the name of the Seljuk and Eldeniz rulers, which are commonly found in the area, confirm that Oghuz Turks have continuously lived in this territory starting from the 7th century, throughout the Middle Ages.

There is a lot of evidence that Turkic tribes already lived in Karabakh before the 7th century. One of them is the hydronym “Honashen” associated with the name of the Hun Turks. This is a 62 km long river, which originates at the eastern foothills of the Karabakh Range (it is written as “Khonashen” due to the absence of the letter “h” in Russian, and A.A.Iessen used it as “Khanashen”), flows through Khojavend and Agjabadi districts and dries up before reaching Gavurarkh, one of the ancient irrigation systems of Azerbaijan. A document dating from 1727



Fig. 1. A view of Nargiztepe from the east



Fig. 2. The excavation site in Nargiztepe



Fig. 3. The remains of a raw brick wall



Fig. 4. A hearth on the brick floor



Fig. 5. A medieval and late period cemetery at the eastern foot of Nargiztepe



Fig. 6. Ceramic jugs found in a stone box grave and a jar burial



Fig. 7. A piece of a paint-patterned vessel

Fig. 8. A piece of a paint-patterned vessel



Fig. 9. A body fragment of a vessel with a drawing

mentions a village called Honabad in Bargushad district. The original name of the former Mardakert was also Hunashen or Khonashen, and a large part of the Karabakh plain was called Khonashen steppe [Qeybullayev, 1990, s.108]. Thus, it is not accidental that the place named “Khonashen” was called by the Byzantine historian Theophanes as a “country of the Huns” [Qeybullayev, 1990, s.108]. By the way, it should be noted that the word “shen” is of ancient Turkic origin and means a “populated place.” For example, in the Khazar khaganate, the khagan’s fortress was called al-Bayda or Sarashen, which means “white fortress.” At the beginning of the 8th century, this fortress became the center of a large city called Khanbalig [Плетнева, 1986, с.5]. The words “shen” and “shenlik” are also used in the Azerbaijani language to mean a settlement and a place of celebrations. It should also be noted that there is information from as early as the 3rd century about the presence of Hun Turks, who played an important role in the ethnogenesis of the Azerbaijani people, in the South Caucasus [Джафаров, 1985, с.16, 23]. Analyzing the works of Byzantine historians and Georgian sources, Z.Bunyadov writes that in 576, a large number of Sabir Turks were resettled to the Ganja (Sakashen) area, as a result of which a country of Huns was formed between the Kura and Araz rivers [Bünyadov, 2007, s.200].

The area, which is now the Nargiztepe complex, was located at the junction of the two large provinces of Albania (the lower one being Otena or Uti, and the upper one being Orchistena or Arsakh) in Antiquity and the early Middle Ages. There is considerable research on the fact that these two provinces were part of Albania (Arran) during these periods [Мамедова, 1987; Bünyadov, 2007; Qeybullayev, 1990, s.117, 124, 200-217; Гейбуллаев, 1991, с.220-229 və b.). F.Mammadova writes: “The Albanian territories on the right bank of the Kura were divided into four large provinces (nahangs): Arsakh, Uti, Paytakaran and Sunik. Each of them was divided into separate districts” [Мамедова, 1987, с.7-8]. For example, in the early Middle Ages, Arsakh itself consisted of 11 districts [Azərbaycan tarixi, 2007, s.86]. Analyzing the information given by Greek and Roman historians, F.Mammadova rejects claims that Uti and Arsakh were occupied in the first century BC [Мамедова, 1987, с.11]. Albanian historian Movses Kaghankatvatsi clearly shows that the border of the Albanian country stretched from the Araz River to the Hunan fortress (a fortress city at the confluence of the Khram River with the Kura) [Kalankatuklu, 1993, I kitab, V fəsil].

Archaeological studies in Nargiztepe was carried out in 2013–2015 and 2017. In the course of the explorations, we were assisted in carrying out a number of practical works by German specialists, members of the Azerbaijani–German international expedition; geophysicists Y.Fassbinder and F.Besker developed a magnetic map of the area, and A.Kvast created topographic plans of the monument using modern technology.

The excavations carried out on an area of 60 sq.m. in the north-western part of the Nargiztepe settlement (on squares A1 and A2) in order to determine its stratigraphy showed that the monument consisted mainly of three cultural layers with a total thickness of 4.6 m: Bronze and Early Iron Age, Antiquity and the Middle Ages. The thickness of the upper

cultural layer dating to the Middle Ages is about 0.8–1.0 m. In this layer, along with the remains of buildings, household wells and hearths, fragments of glazed and unglazed pottery and stone tools were found.

In Nargiztepe, the Antiquity layer begins at a depth of 1.0–1.05 m. Its total thickness is about 2.5 m. Here, in the north-eastern corner of the excavation site, a brickwork built of raw bricks measuring 42 cm x 25 cm x 13 (14) cm and fragments of black and red polished pottery were initially discovered. A reinforced soil layer (floor) and seven holes (left by wooden posts) were revealed at a depth of 1.35 cm near the eastern wall of the excavation.

In square A1, at a depth of 1.5 m, a part of a neatly finished wall (3.8 m long) made of raw bricks was exposed (Fig. 3). This 53–54 cm wide wall consists of two rows of raw bricks in two different sizes. The size of the larger bricks is 44–45 cm x 33–34 cm x 9–10 cm. The size of the smaller (narrower) bricks is 44–45 cm x 19 cm x 9–10 cm. The bricks were made with a small admixture of plants and held together with clay-mud with a very strong bonding capacity spread at a thickness of about 2 cm. Square and rectangular raw bricks were widely used in the buildings of antique Albanian settlements [Babayev, 1990, s.68]. Interestingly, the size of the bricks used is more typical for the antique structures of the third, lower layer (7th–6th centuries BC) of the Garatepe settlement (located in the Mil plain, Beylagan district) than for its second layer (5th–1st centuries BC) [Исмизаде, 1965, s.76–83]. According to J. Khalilov, the date indicated for the second layer of Garatepe is not accurate, because there are no finds from the 2nd–1st centuries BC, and this middle layer of the monument can be dated to the 5th–3rd centuries BC [Халилов, 1984, с.26]. Square raw bricks (42 cm x 42 cm x 14/15 cm; 44 cm x 44 cm x 15/16 cm) of sizes typical for antique structures were also found on the site of Galatepe town in the Mil plain [Əliyev və b., 2013, s.204].

During the clearing of an area of 10 square meters in the cultural layer located 0.6 m below the wall in question, at a depth of 2.1 m, sixteen pottery fragments, one cattle tooth and three stone tools were found. One of the fragments was decorated with a red-painted pattern of vertical wavy stripes depicting water. Such a pattern can be found in

other monuments of the same period in Azerbaijan (Galatepe, Garakobar, Toyratepe, etc.). Among the finds of the Antiquity layer, the most striking one was a body fragment of a vessel decorated with red paint (Fig. 7). This milk-colored fragment of a large-capacity pottery vessel belongs to high-quality ceramics. It was made of fine clay, well baked, and decorated with geometric and zoomorphic (and anthropomorphic?) patterns in red paint: there is a meander between two straight lines. Below, there is a drawing of a bridled horse and a rope extending forward. The rider on the horse in front (a very small part is observable) holds the end of this rope [Əliyev, Əliyev, 2017, s.253, şəк. 12]. The fragment in many ways resembles antique Greek ceramics. In particular, the meander is more common on Greek vessels of the 5th century BC [Кругликова, 1984, рис. 6, 11, 26].

Remains of structures constructed from square raw bricks (with a size of 42 cm x 42 cm x 14 cm) typical for Antiquity and a rectangular hearth (0.8 m x 0.4 m) in the center of the brick floor were unearthed in the cultural layer at a depth of 2.2–2.3 m (Fig. 4). About 120 ceramic artifacts, stone and bone tools and osteological remains were found around the hearth. Pottery artifacts are mainly light gray and dark red. They were neatly made of fine clay and their surfaces were well polished. Fragments of large-capacity vessels are also common. A sharp-pointed knife blade was also found in this layer (Fig. 11, a). Its length is 13 cm and width in the center is 2 cm. The blade is in good condition as it was stuck between ash layers. One of the bone tools found was made from a tubular bone of a ruminant. This object, the function of which is not entirely clear, has a hole on both sides made with a sharp tool that has left a clear mark (Fig. 11, b).



Fig. 10. Stone and clay wheels

In the Antiquity layer of the excavation site (square A1, depth 2.4–2.6 m), burnt pieces of clay, fragments from the base of a crock, and body fragments of vessels made from clay mixed with sand were found. The same layer also contains artifacts made of fine clay, well baked, and decorated with a red-painted pattern of geometric lines (straight, oblique, wavy). This type of patterned vessels is typical for the pottery of Albanian settlements and burial monuments on both the left and right banks of the Kura. During the excavations, fragments with painted patterns were also found in the cultural layer at a depth of 2.8–3.6 m: a faint trace of a red-painted stripe and a triangular pattern was preserved on a small spherical crock. The height of the vessel is 4.2 cm and the diameter of its base is 3 cm.

Among the pottery of the layer we studied, there is one intact whorl (Fig. 10, b). It is flat on one side and convex on the other. It is 3.3 cm in diameter and 1.4 cm thick. It has a hole in the middle and was made of fine clay. Another item recovered from the soil dug out of the trench excavated to a depth of about 2 m over the monument also attracted attention. This item made from solid gray river stone is in the shape of a wheel. It has a hole (4.5 cm in diameter) made in the middle on both sides. The object is 16 cm in diameter and 6 cm thick. There is a small fracture on one edge (Fig. 10, a).



Fig. 11. An iron knife and a bone item

Of great interest are the remains of a 2.7 m wide wall made of large oval stones and raw bricks, found at a depth of 2.5 m in the Antiquity layer of Nargiztepe. A part of it with a length of 5.2 m was unearthed (Fig. 2). We think that this wall covered about 1.3 hectares of Nargiztepe in the form of a belt, and in later historical periods it was the stones of this fortress that were used in early medieval buildings and medieval burial cromlechs. It should also be noted that the remains of the wall were not cleared down to the foundation for security reasons, and only two rows lying on top of each other were excavated.

On the south–western side of Nargiztepe, stone and pottery items were found scattered in the pits and the surrounding area [Əliyev, İbrahimli, Əliyeva, 2017, s.20-25]. A test pit measuring 2 x 2 m was dug around one of the pits formed by rainwater, and a large burial jar was found with the mouth facing south and the base facing north. Its height was 1.35 m, the cross-sectional width of the body was 0.8 m, and the diameters of the mouth and base were 37 cm and 22 cm respectively. The edges of the mouth were decorated with rope-shaped molding patterns. The deceased was buried in a crouched position lying on the left side, with the head towards the mouth of the jar and face towards the west. The bones were severely deformed. Judging by the grave goods, the deceased was possibly a woman. In particular, a gray intact jug (Fig. 6, b), a fragmented pitcher, an elegantly made black polished bowl (broken), four bracelets made of bronze wire, a pair of earrings, a ring and about 90 colorful beads made of different materials (Fig. 12) were found inside the burial jar around the head. Similar items have been found in other antique jar burials of Caucasian Albania [Qaziyev, 1960, XXXVII tablo;

Халилов, 1984, с.140, табл. XXX, 6-7; Ахундова, 2020, с.86, табл. XXII, 9-10, табл. XXVIII].

A layer of burnt soil and ash is observed in a cross-section of a trench dug by a tractor 25–30 m east of the hill called “Garaja Choban’s grave”, in the south-eastern part of Nargiztepe. Twelve meters west of it, fragments of a red-painted pottery vessel were found scattered on a pile of soil cast to the side of the trench. Many of these body fragments of a large pink pottery vessel made of fine clay are rich in patterns drawn with red paint (Fig. 8). These patterns consist of geometric (straight, perpendicular and intersecting) lines, arches, images of nature (sun, mountains and trees), and zoomorphic (deer with and without antlers) drawings. The handle of the vessel located on its shoulder also has red intersecting stripes drawn with red paint. Such patterns or its individual elements are often observed on ceramic artifacts found in antique monuments of Karabakh (Galatepe, Garakobar, Garakopektepe, etc.), as well as in Mingachevir excavations. [Qaziyev, 1960, VIII–IX tablolar]. Unfortunately, only a part of this rare artistic gem of a vessel was found, and that in the form of fragments (about 50). Some fragments are similar to those found during excavations at a nearby settlement of Nargiztepe. Inspection of the inside of the trench next to the pile of soil, where the fragments of the paint-patterned vessel in question were scattered, revealed the remains of a large burial jar (along with human bones) with the upper and lower parts compressed and almost stuck together. The study of grave monuments in this area through archaeological excavations in the future will make it possible to study the religious beliefs and burial customs of the ancient inhabitants of Nargiztepe, who lived here for a long time in Antiquity (confirmed by the thickness and richness of the cultural layer).

Preliminary studies in the current area, which is part of the Nargiztepe complex, as well as a review of various earthworks, show that there is a large necropolis of jar burials here. The fact that the burial jars were located under a solid rocky ground on a less inclined slope, at a considerable depth, allowed them to survive. In the future, archeological studies of this necropolis can play an important role in the study of the political, socio-economic and cultural life of the ancient Azerbaijani state Caucasian Albania. G.Goshgarli, who thoroughly studies grave monuments that occupy an important place in the material and cultural heritage of Albania, believes that throughout Antiquity three types of graves (earthen graves, stone box graves and jar burials) were used and such burial customs continued into the early Middle Ages [Гошгарлы, 2012, с.92]. He notes that the study of the phenomenon of widespread use of jar burials in Antiquity is still a challenge, and believes that this was associated with a new stage in the development of agriculture and the spread of Zoroastrianism [Гошгарлы, 2012, с.139]. Other researchers have also noted that the grave goods of jar burials in Azerbaijan are richer and more colorful compared to the complexes in neighboring Georgia and



Fig. 12. Decorative items made of bronze and various stones

Armenia [Нонешвили, 1992, с.117]. M.Khalilov rightly notes that the number of jar burial monuments in the territory of Azerbaijan significantly decreased, and the range of jar burials shrank to some extent in the early Middle Ages compared to Antiquity. The researcher attributes this to the process of suppression of idolatry in Albania in the 4th century after the rise of Christianity to the level of the state religion [Xəlilov, 2009, s.31].

In the summer of 2015, during farming activities, flat stone slabs and various pottery artifacts mixed with soil were cast out of the trench dug around Nargiztepe. One of the pottery vessels survived almost intact (Fig. 6, a). This yellowish oinochoe-type vessel with a three-spouted wide mouth was handcrafted from fine clay with a mixture of sand. The diameter of its mouth is up to 14 cm. The stick-shaped handle connects the shoulder of the vessel to its rim. It has a rotund body, and the length of its circle in the center reaches 55 cm. The diameter of the flat and even slightly oval base is very small, 6.5 cm. The height of the vessel is 21.5 cm. Similar vessels are found in Azerbaijan both in antique monuments (for example, in the Yaloylutepe culture of the 3rd–1st centuries BC) [Qazıyev, 1960, s.10, XXII tablo, 1–2 və 5-ci şəkillər; Bədəlov, 2003, s.73-74] and in early medieval monuments. A flat rectangular bluish mother-of-pearl bead with a hole in the center was discovered next to this vessel (Fig. 13). Inside the trench, the edges of several horizontal stone slabs were clearly visible. Human bones were also visible,



Fig. 13. A bead made of paste

scattered on the soil cast aside. These indicate the presence of earthen graves covered with stone slabs in the described area. Along with other types of graves, stone box graves were also common in the Albanian burial tradition. This tradition continued in the early Middle Ages, as well. For example, such graves were found in the Yedditepe necropolis (Fuzuli district) adjacent to Nargiztepe [Xəlilov, 2009, s.37]. However, it

should be noted that early medieval Christian graves are usually no longer accompanied by grave goods. The aforementioned items confirm the connection of the stone-covered graves located here with the period of Antiquity or the pagan religious rites and burial customs of the early Middle Ages. However, a more reliable result can be obtained only after a complete excavation and study of several graves in the area.

As we can see, the Nargiztepe complex of monuments allows us to shed light on different areas of cultural and economic life of the ancient Azerbaijani population. The results of early archeological excavations demonstrate the richness of Albanian cultural heritage during the period under review. Despite the complex socio-political landscape of the time, the Albanians achieved great success in the art of construction, creating excellent examples of fortifications and civil buildings. Various fields of art (especially pottery, stone carving, bone carving, etc.) were highly developed. The density of settlements and grave monuments also testifies to the dense population of Nargiztepe and its environs.

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This area is a good place to recreate a model of a unified Albanian culture through extensive research.

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Goshgarli Goshgar*Head of Archaeological Service Department of the Institute of Archaeology, Ethnography and Anthropology of ANAS, PhD in History, Associate Professor*

CAUCASIAN ALBANIA AND OTHER COUNTRIES OF THE CAUCASIAN-WESTERN ASIAN REGION IN THE SYSTEM OF THE POLITICAL STRUGGLE BETWEEN PARTHIA AND ROME AT THE TURN OF TWO ERAS

In the 2nd century BC, the Mediterranean, Western Asian and Central Asian regions were undergoing global political changes, which largely determined the further course of historical processes in these regions over the next several centuries. These processes were mainly driven by the global military–political and economic confrontation between the two great empires of antiquity – the Roman and the Parthian. Dozens of large and small states of the Mediterranean, Western and Central Asia and the South Caucasus, including one of the most ancient states on the territory of historical Azerbaijan – Caucasian Albania – were also in a greater or lesser degree involved in the opposition of these titans.

In the middle of the 2nd century BC, Rome, having finally dealt with the Carthaginian state during the third Punic war (149–146 BC) and having subjugated Macedonia and the Greek city-states (poleis) in the south of the Balkans and on the coast of Asia Minor, became the de-facto master of the entire Mediterranean [Еропов, 1989, с.449-451]. Rome's wars of conquest in no small measure also pursued commercial goals. The unique international trading system, created over the centuries by Phoenicians, Greeks and Carthaginians in the Mediterranean basin, came under the control of the Romans.

In the same period, the vast Seleucid kingdom finally disintegrated. In its eastern provinces back in the 3rd century BC, the Parthian Kingdom was formed. In the second half of the 2nd century BC, under King Mithridates I (171–138 BC), Parthia became a world power with borders stretching from the Amu Darya in the east to the Euphrates in the West [Зеймаль, 1989, с.452-455]. In the early 2nd century BC, to the east of Parthia, there was a strong Greco-Bactrian kingdom that preserved the Greek traditions of political structure and social

life [Зеймаль, 1989, с.460]. At the end of the 2nd century BC, the Greco-Bactrian kingdom gave place to the Kushan kingdom, which at the turn of the two eras, along with Parthia and Rome, became one of the guarantors of the functioning of the Great Silk Road [Зеймаль, Ильин, 1989, с.220-222; Всемирная история, 1956, с.669-676].

Neither could the Seleucids keep under control the land to the west of the Euphrates. Here, in the 2nd century BC, many independent large and small states emerged. These were the Kingdom of Pontus on the south-eastern coast of the Black Sea [Сапрыкин, 1996], the Armenian kingdom around the lake Van [Тревер, 1953], as well as Cappadocia, Pergamum, Palmyra, Judea and others [Свенцицкая, 1989, с.330-338]. The Seleucid state itself by the end of the 2nd century BC reduced to a small Syrian kingdom. This kingdom, like all the above states west of the Euphrates that emerged during the collapse of the Seleucid Empire in the 1st century BC, became Roman provinces or vassal states dependent on Rome [Еропов, 1989, с.37-38].

In the 3rd–2nd centuries BC, the situation in the South Caucasus also stabilized. Here, in the western Black Sea region, the Kingdom of Colchis was located, and to the east of it, to the south of the Greater Caucasus was the state of Iberia. Albania was located in the eastern part of the South Caucasus, from the Greater Caucasus Mountain Range in the north to the Aras River in the south and from the Caspian Sea in the east to the Goycha lake in the west and the Alazani valley in the northwest. These three countries used to be part of the Achaemenid state and were, apparently, included into one satrapy in the 5th–6th centuries BC. It was evidenced by the excavations of the grandiose palace complex in the Shamkir region, referred to as “Caucasian Persepolis” among researchers [Babayev, Qagoşidze, Knauss

и др., 2012, с.379-385]. The Achaemenids, as it is known, paid special attention to the development of international trade. It is no coincidence that Darius I was referred to as “tradesman” for his interest in the development of trade. [Рейдер, Черкасова, 1979, с.246]. They preserved the international trading system that had developed before them and even tried to boost its development. This was largely facilitated by the adoption of a new coin, the “golden daric” (the “Persian daric”). The high content of pure gold in these coins (97%) made them the main gold coin in international trade for a long time [Дандамаев, 1989, с.141]. Along with this, many stone-paved “royal roads” were built, with extensive infrastructure to serve both public officials, for example, royal messengers, and merchants engaged in long-distance trade [Геродот, 2006, V, 52-54, с.347]. This, undoubtedly, was also the case with the lands of the Persians in the South Caucasus, and, therefore, fairly broad trade and economic ties were formed between the abovementioned states of the South Caucasus long before the Roman–Parthian era. According to many researchers, including the author of this paper, it was in the Achaemenid period, at the beginning of the 5th century BC, after the Persian conquest of northwestern India, that a special trade route was formed from India through Central Asia to the eastern coast of the Caspian Sea, which then run through it to the mouth of the Kura, then along this river through the entire Albania to Iberia and from there, along the Rioni river to the Black Sea coast of Colchis [Брашинский, 1980, с.98-99; Гозалишвили, 1956, с.153-160; Лордкипашидзе, 1957, с.373-389; Гошгарлы, 2009, с.33-40; Гошгарлы, 2020, с.38-56]. Such an active trade route, on the one hand, created close trade ties between Colchis, Iberia and Albania as early as in the Achaemenid era, and, on the other hand, facilitated their involvement in international trade along this route.

It was, possibly, the great importance of this trade route that became the reason for the detailed and, above all, absolutely correct description of the Caspian Sea by Herodotus [Геродот, 2006, I, 202-204, с.99]. According to M.M.Rasulova, Herodotus’ informants were most likely the merchants themselves who were trading along this route, who he could come in contact with during his stay in Phasis, one of the most important Greek emporias on the eastern coast of the Black Sea [Пасулова, 2008, с.82-83]. However, Herodotus reports nothing

about this trade route itself. The pioneer here was Strabo, who, referring to earlier researchers, in particular, Eratosthenes, Aristobulus and Patroclus, described in detail all the stages of this trade route, which was dubbed by the scientific world as Strabo Road [Гошгарлы, 2009, с.33-40].

Our emphasis on this trade route is due to the fact that it continued to function in the subsequent Hellenistic and Roman-Parthian periods of the West Asian and South Caucasian history and to a certain extent determined the foreign Parthian and Roman policies in the South Caucasus, including those in relation to Albania, at the turn of two eras.

Rome started a massive advance into the Eastern Mediterranean and further into Asia Minor as early as in the beginning of the 2nd century BC. But soon, due to the complex social, economic and political problems engulfing the Roman society [Еропов, 1989, с.22-29], the activity of Rome in the East was suspended and resumed only in early 1st century BC. At this time, another political reformation took place in West Asia. In the second half of the 2nd century BC, the activity of Parthia west of the Euphrates also weakened, since the nomad Tocharians began to threaten it from the east. In fact, for the entire second half of the 2nd century BC, Parthia was repulsing the onslaught of the Tocharians, and it was not before under Mithridates II (123–88 BC) that the situation in the east was stabilized and Parthia reactivated its policy in the South Caucasus and west of the Euphrates [Зеймаль, 1989, с.453-455]. It was Mithridates II who enthroned in Armenia the Armenian prince Tigranes, who was in his captivity. Tigranes, upon becoming the king of Armenia Tigranes II, immediately “thanked” Parthia by breaking the alliance with it and entering into an alliance with the king of Pontus Mithridates VI Eupator by marrying his daughter [История древнего мира, 1989, кн.2, с.390].

In this situation, at the end of the 2nd century BC, the Great Silk Road began to function and became the most important factor to determine the foreign policy of all leading countries it ran through.

Since the establishment of the Great Silk Road, there were already several actively functioning routes. Their intensity depended on the political situation along this route in a given historical period. In general, there are three main routes of the Silk Road, which were active in the antique period [Иерусалимская, 1990, с.58-60].

All of them originated in the capital of China, Chang'an, ran along the Great Wall of China and went to the city of Dunhua, where the Taklamakan Desert began. Here the road forked, skirting the desert from the south and north. The southern route along the Issyk-Kul Lake and Khotan led to Bactria, where it split into two routes. The first one ran south to India and the second to the west to the area of Merv where, joining the northern route, went to the Mediterranean and Black Seas through the lands of Parthia, skirting the Caspian Sea from the south, and through Mesopotamia and Syria. The third route was more complicated. It led from China through the Tian Shan mountains and the Fergana Valley to Samarkand, Bukhara and Khorezm, and then towards the Caspian Sea and, skirting it from the north, through the North Caucasian steppes, went to the Greek colonies on the banks of the Azov and Black seas, in particular to Tanais [Гошгарлы, 2020, с.36-37]. In addition to these three main routes, there were others, branching from these main ones. The intensity of these routes depended on the political situation along them in a particular historical period.

It is easy to note that, in Central Asia, near Bactria, Sogdiana and Khorezm, the routes of the Great Silk Road intersected with the so-called "Strabo Road", which functioned, as noted above, since the Achaemenid kingdom (6th–4th centuries BC). Its active functioning for more than three centuries before the Great Silk Road undoubtedly formed a developed infrastructure along it, ensuring its vital activity. And taking into account the fact that it was the shortest way from Central Asia to the Black and Mediterranean Seas, it would be surprising if merchants, who traded along the Silk Road at the turn of the two eras, did not use this "run-in" international trade route without turning it into one of the actively functioning branches of the Great Silk Road. This turned the states of the South Caucasus not only into active participants in international trade exchange at the turn of the two eras, but into a zone of political rivalry between the great powers of that time, who sought to control this route and the countries through which it passed. The main struggle here at the turn of the two eras (2nd–1st centuries BC to 1st–2nd centuries AD) was between the largest empires, Parthian and Roman. Parthia did everything in its power to deprive Rome of the opportunity to directly establish trade relations with the Far East, earning much money

on intermediary trade, and Rome, in turn, sought, contrary to the efforts of Parthia, to establish direct stable trade relations with the Central Asian countries, China and India, without Parthian mediation. This factor largely determined the foreign policy relations between these empires. But at the end of the second half of the 2nd century BC, when Rome and Parthia had, as already noted, been solving internal socio-political and economic issues for some time, Armenia and the Kingdom of Pontus joined the struggle for control over the Great Silk Road. The last section of the most active southern route of the Great Silk Road passed through their lands in Asia Minor. Moreover, at the beginning of the 1st century BC, Pontic king Mithridates VI Eupator subjugated the Colchis and then the Bosphorus kingdoms on the Black Sea coast [Немировский, 1980, с.154-160]. This fact strengthened the position of Mithridates VI Eupator in the Caucasus and in the Azov region, and also provided enormous economic benefits. For example, Colchis was rich in gold, ship timber, grain, flax, hemp, wax and other goods, and what is more, the Colchians were excellent warriors [Немировский, 1980, с.157-158]. After the conquest of Colchis and the Bosphorus, both the southern branch of the Great Silk Road and two of its other main routes, namely, the South Caucasian (i.e. the Strabo Road), which went along the Kura and the Rioni to the Greek colony (emporion) on the Colchis coast, Phasis, and the northern one, which skirted the Caspian Sea from the north and led to Bosphorian cities of Panticapaeum and Tanais, were under the control of Mithridates VI Eupator.

With the support of the Kingdom of Pontus, the king of Armenia, Tigranes II, also stepped up. He founded a new capital, Tigranakert in the upper reaches of the Tigris and Euphrates, in the area of the southern route of the Silk Road, south-west of the Lake Van, where he resettled many artisans and merchants from the cities of Syria and Asia Minor that he captured [История древнего мира, кн.2, 1989, с.392].

Parthia was not very much concerned about the current situation, since it was related to the section of the southern route of the Silk Road, located west of the Euphrates and was not part of the area of responsibility and control of Parthia. But for Rome, Armenia under Tigranes II and Pontus under Mithridates VI Eupator became new extra links in intermediary trade with the Central Asian region,

China and India. This, on the one hand, significantly increased the cost of oriental goods that arrived along all the three main routes of the Silk Road to the Roman domain, and on the other hand, prevented the advancement of Roman products to the East. It is quite clear that such a situation could not suit Rome and its policy in the East as early as at the beginning of the 1st century BC was aimed at eliminating these excessive and unwanted intermediary links, which was achieved through the campaigns of Sulla, Lucullus and Pompey, and resulted in a significant expansion of the Roman state in the East.

The rulers of Pontus and Armenia themselves created the reason for a massive Roman offensive in the East by invading Roman lands in Asia Minor. Athens defected to Mithridates VI. The Roman Senate immediately sent an army under the command of Sulla against Mithridates VI. In 86 BC, in the battles of Chaeronea and Orchomenus, Mithridates VI was defeated. In 85 BC, the parties made peace in Dardanus. Mithridates IV returned all lands to Rome and paid an indemnity [Еропов, 1989, с.34]. But soon, serious socio-political problems flared up in Rome again. It was connected first with the uprising of commander Quintus Sertorius in Spain, and then the servile revolt under the leadership of Spartacus, which again distracted Rome from the problems in the East, where Mithridates VI again began to threaten its interests [Еропов, 1989, с.36-38]. Then Rome decided to finally cut this Gordian Knot and get the situation in Asia Minor and the South Caucasus under its control. In the 60s of the 1st century BC, as a result of the campaigns of Roman generals Lucullus and Pompey, repeatedly described in scientific literature, Mithridates VI was defeated, driven out of Pontus, and fled to Colchis, and further to the Bosphorus, where his son Pharnaces ruled. Pontus, Bithynia, Syria and the annexed Judea became the provinces of Rome, with a certain autonomy for Judea [Еропов, 1989, с.38]. The king of Armenia Tigranes II, having lost the support of the Pontic kingdom and spoiled relations with Parthia, was forced to recognize himself a vassal of Rome and give up all conquered territories.

Therefore, the vast territory created by seizing the lands of neighboring countries with the assistance of strong allies got out of Armenian control. The state created by Tigranes II collapsed during his lifetime. Subject to the peace treaty concluded with Pompey in Artashat in 66 BC, Tigranes II avowed himself "a

friend and ally of the Roman people" and paid a huge monetary contribution. From that time on, the fate of Armenia would be in the hands of Rome for several centuries, and Roman legions would be constantly present on its territory.

In summary, "...being on the most important path between Iran (Parthia) and Rome, having great strategic importance for both powers, Armenia, without the help of reliable allies, could hardly maintain its own independence within its native territory. Extensive conquests were beyond its strength and Tigranes' empire began to fall apart during his lifetime" [История древнего мира, 1989, кн.2, с.392].

Having defeated Mithridates VI in Pontus and subjugated Armenia to the power of Rome, Pompey decided to start subordinating the South Caucasus to Rome, but before heading to Colchis, where Mithridates VI took refuge, he decided to secure his rear and deal with the two states of the South Caucasus, i.e. Albania and Iberia. Both provided assistance to Mithridates VI and Tigranes II in the fight against Rome [Тревер, 1959, с.88-90] and, in Pompey's opinion, should have been punished.

According to Roman authors [Страбон, Тит Пивий, Плиний Старший, Клавдий Птолемей, Дион Кассий и др.], the Albanians initially allowed the Romans to pass through their lands in order to pursue Mithridates VI, but later, when Pompey decided to spend the winter on the banks of the Kura in Albania, the Albanians decided to attack them. This battle that took place in December 66 BC and ended with the victory of the Romans, as well as the entire campaign of Pompey to the Caucasus have been repeatedly described in detail in scientific literature [Тревер, 1959, с.91-96; История древнего мира, 1989, кн.2, с.392-394; Алиев, 1992, с.173-176; Расулова, 2008, с.124-126; Гошгарлы, 2019, с.47-49]. Nevertheless, some details of this campaign, as it seems, may have a different interpretation.

Having defeated the Albanians on the banks of the Kura and concluded peace with their king Oroeses, Pompey invaded Iberia, defeated its king Artok and, taking his sons hostage, invaded Colchis, and soon found himself on the Black Sea coast in Phasis, where the Roman fleet was already waiting for him. Researchers relying on sources, consider the further campaign of Pompey in the South Caucasus according to a single scheme.

Having arrived at Phasis, Pompey did not find Mithridates VI in Colchis. He managed to get over to his son in the Bosphorus, and it was at the same time that Pompey was informed that Oroeses was again preparing for war with him. Of the two options, i.e. to end the pursuit of Mithridates VI or to go to subdue the Albanians again, Pompey chose the second.

Researchers have long noticed that Pompey did not actively pursue Mithridates VI after his flight from Armenia. Apparently, he considered Mithridates VI no longer dangerous to the main interests of Rome and, in the course of this pursuit, paid more attention to other issues, namely, to establish Roman control over the South Caucasus and prevent the strengthening of Parthian influence north of Atropatene.

However, in order to punish the Albanians for violating the treaty concluded with Pompey, he set out on a campaign to Albania not by a short route, through the already conquered Iberia, but by a roundabout route through Armenia. This bizarre way from Phasis to Armenia, followed by a turn towards Albania, looks extremely illogical, since it gave the Albanians additional time to prepare for war. After all, it is well known that promptness and surprise have always been the chief assets of Pompey's military strategy and tactics. Scientific literature provides several versions explaining this strange route. K.V.Trever gives a comprehensive analysis of them all [Тревер, 1959, с.96-108]. But all of them, including K.V.Trever herself, relied on the reports of antique authors, who unanimously asserted that the purpose of Pompey's second campaign was to punish the Albanians for violating the treaty. However, a detailed analysis of Pompey's second campaign shows that the reason for this second invasion should be sought in a different source. An important fact is that Pompey made the decision to undertake a new campaign to Albania in Phasis, where he had the opportunity to personally verify its role in extensive trade with the East. Phasis was a large emporium where merchants arrived from Bactria, India and China [Юцынов, 1984, с.77-97]. Trade went along the Strabo Road. Actually, the Colchian and Iberian sections of this trade route were already under the control of Pompey, and if the Albanian section of this trade route was added to it, then two issues could be addressed at once; firstly, to prevent, as already noted, the growth of the influence of Parthia in the South Caucasus north of Atropatene, and secondly,

to reach the Central Asian section of the Silk Road, bypassing Parthia. Apparently, it was this factor that caused the second campaign, and it means that the Albanians had not violated the treaty concluded with Pompey and were not preparing for a new war.

Most likely, Pompey's biographers and, above all, the participants in his campaigns in Asia Minor and the South Caucasus, in particular Theophanes of Mytilene, whose records and reports were the main source for Roman historians in this matter, tried to shift the responsibility from Pompey for violating the treaty with the Albanians, blaming the Albanians themselves. The analysis of the second campaign clearly shows the unpreparedness of the Albanians for a major war with Pompey. In this view, the roundabout route chosen by Pompey from Phasis through Armenia to Albania becomes absolutely natural. Using this route, he could hide his true intentions until the last moment and, turning sharply from Armenia towards Albania, catch Oroeses by surprise. Pompey was able to fully implement his plan. When he turned in Armenia in the Dilijan area towards Agstafa, he did not meet the resistance of the Albanians and crossed the Kura without major difficulties. Neither did he meet the resistance of the Albanians on the long way from the Kura to the Iori river, and then from Iori to Alazani, where the Albanian section of the Strabo Road started. Only after the Romans crossed the Alazani in 65 BC and a direct road opened to the Albanian capital of Albania, Qabala, the Albanians decided to give battle to the Romans, which was won by Pompey once again. Researchers, having analyzed the information of Roman authors about this battle, come to the conclusion that here, Pompey was opposed by a hastily assembled and weakly armed militia from the mountain tribes, which also included women. The strike force, called upon to strengthen the foot militia, was the cavalry under the command of Oroeses brother Cosis. It was the defeat of this cavalry by Pompey that decided the battle on Alazani. The victory in this battle opened the way for Pompey to the capital of Albania, Kabalaka (Qabala), but Pompey, having encamped in the foothills of the Greater Caucasus, started negotiations with Oroeses, after which the latter wrote a letter recognizing his submission to Rome, presented rich gifts to Pompey and gave up two hostages, from among the Albanian nobility, who, subsequently, participated in the triumph of Pompey in Rome [Тревер, 1959,

c.105]. Pompey's further actions fully confirm the main goal of this second campaign in Albania – to reach the Caspian Sea along the Albanian part of the Strabo Road and establish full control for Rome over this international trade route from the Black to the Caspian Seas. But this last stage of Pompey's campaigns in Albania is very poorly and, above all, contradictorily covered in Roman sources [Тревер, 1959, с.105-107]. The further route of Pompey can be reconstructed based on Plutarch's report: "After this battle, Pompey intended to go to the Caspian Sea, but was forced to turn back because of the many poisonous reptiles, although he was only three days away from the sea" [Плутарх: Помпей, 36]. This report of Plutarch, together with Pompey's goal to survey the Albanian section of the Strabo Road, suggests that the Romans moved towards the Caspian along the right or the left bank of the Kura, since there are indeed many poisonous reptiles in the Mil and Mugan steppes in summer. But this could hardly stop the legions of Rome who had conquered half of the oecumene. There are no reports on new major battles between the Romans and the Albanians, and the suggestion made by V.I. Leviatov that it was the Albanians' resistance that forced Pompey to turn back has no real confirmation [Левиатов, 1950, с.82]. Most likely, Pompey was forced to return to Asia Minor before reaching the Caspian by a change in the political situation in the Western Asia region.

When analyzing the Roman campaigns led by Lucullus and Pompey to Asia Minor and the South Caucasus, one cannot consider them in isolation from the relationship between Rome and Parthia. Global rivalry between them did not exclude flexible policies towards each other at certain historical moments.

Thus, in 95 BC, Tigranes II, who was enthroned in Armenia by the king of Parthia Mithridates II, quickly took advantage of the temporary weakening of Parthia, occupied Atropatene, reached Ecbatana where he burned the summer residence of Parthian kings [История древнего мира, кн.2, 1989, с.390-391], and, as already noted, entered into an alliance with the king of Pontus Mithridates VI Eupator and became related to him.

In response, in 92 BC, the king of Parthia, Mithridates II, sent an ambassador to Rome to Sulla, establishing contact with Rome for the first time. This step can be seen as a signal to Rome showing

that Parthia will not interfere in the struggle of Rome with the Pontic and Armenian kingdoms, which, in alliance with each other, invaded Roman possessions in Asia Minor and the Balkans [История древнего мира, кн.2, 1989, с.391]. In 87–86 BC, Rome undertook a punitive campaign, defeated Mithridates VI in Greece and in Asia Minor. As a result, as already mentioned, in 85 BC, Mithridates VI made peace with Sulla in Dardanus, relinquished all occupied Roman provinces and paid a large indemnity [Еропов, 1989, с.34], but Armenia this time avoided defeat.

During the campaigns of Lucullus and Pompey, Parthia also remained neutral [Алиев, 1992, с.34-35] and hoped again to use Rome to get rid of Tigranes II and Mithridates VI Eupator. But when the goal was achieved, Parthia clearly was no longer going to remain neutral and allow Rome to establish trade ties with Central Asia, China and India bypassing Parthia. Taking advantage of the fact that Pompey was bogged down in Albania, the king of Parthia Phraates III began to ravage the territories subject to Tigranes II and in fact to Rome, threatening the achievements of Pompey in the east of Asia Minor. This meant the beginning of a new cycle of struggle between Parthia and Rome, which forced Pompey to urgently leave Albania and focus on the fight against Parthia. In fact, this cycle of struggle between Rome and Parthia, with varying success, would last until the end of the 1st century BC.

As can be seen, Pompey was the first Roman general to successfully fight in the South Caucasus. But although Albania and Iberia were mentioned among the conquered countries during Pompey's triumph in Rome, they were not actually dependent on Rome due to their remoteness and subsequent political events and they never became Roman provinces [Алиев, 2003, с.35]. But from that time on, Rome constantly kept the situation in the South Caucasus under control and, when its interests in this region were threatened, it immediately and actively reacted to processes that adversely affected Rome. To this end, Roman legions were constantly stationed in Armenia, Syria, Cappadocia, and Colchis. As for Iberia and especially Albania, according to researchers, after Pompey's campaigns, part of Roman trade with the East went through the South Caucasus, bypassing Armenia and Parthia [История древнего мира, кн.2, 1989, с.393].

The next stage of the struggle between Parthia and Rome covers the 50s–30s of the 1st century BC. In the middle of the 1st century BC, during the period of the so-called first triumvirate, when Pompey the Great, Marcus Licinius Crassus and Julius Caesar, having concluded an alliance, started reforming the internal political system of the Roman Republic according to their needs, attention to the East again weakened, of which Parthia immediately took advantage. Marcus Crassus tried to restore the position of Rome and achieve a greater success in the East than Pompey. However, his campaign against Parthia in 53 BC turned into a disaster for Rome. In the Battle of Carrhae in Mesopotamia, he was defeated and died together with his son; 20 thousand Roman legionnaires died and almost as many were captured [Алиев, 1989, с.89]. Parthia immediately occupied Syria and began to control the entire territory up to Jerusalem [Зеймаль, 1989, с.454]. Naturally, Rome's positions weakened in the South Caucasus as well. Julius Caesar planned to rectify the situation. He had ambitious plans. First of all, he wanted to punish Parthia [Шифман, 1990, с.27], and then go to the North Caucasus, along the Caspian through the lands of the Albanians, and conquer the Alans and Sarmatians, the Pontic kingdom and then the Germanic tribes, and, having reached Gallia, which he had already conquered, return to Italy through it [Дарабади, 2009, с.10]. But the unexpected assassination of Caesar left these plans unfulfilled.

Later, one of his generals, a member of the Second Triumvirate Marcus Antonius, tried to carry out these plans of Caesar. He became the ruler of all the eastern provinces of Rome, became close to the queen of Egypt Cleopatra and settled in Alexandria. From here in 39 and 38 BC, he made successful campaigns against Parthia, but the large-scale campaign in 36 BC against Parthia's ally Atropatene ended in a failed siege of Fraaspa, during which Anthony lost a lot of people and siege equipment and was forced to retreat to Armenia [Плутарх: Антоний, 37-50; Алиев, 2004, с.107-108].

Here he blamed his failure on Armenian king Artavasdes, who violated the treaty and did not come to help the Romans. Artavasdes was taken to Alexandria and executed there [Тревер, 1959, с.111]. Leaving Armenia, Anthony instructed his commander Publius Canidius Crassus to conquer Iberia and Albania, which he did. According to

Plutarch, Canidius first defeated the king of Iberia Pharnabazus and then made an alliance with him, and together they attacked the king of Albania Zober, forcing him to recognize the rule of Rome [Тревер, 1959, с.112].

So, in the 30s of the 1st century BC, Rome was trying to restore its positions in Western Asia and the South Caucasus. According to K.V. Trever, Canidius left garrisons in Armenia, Iberia and Albania, which were destroyed by Armenian king Artashat II, the son of Artavasdes executed by Anthony. Since at that moment the struggle between Anthony and Octavian came to a head, Rome again lost control of the South Caucasus temporarily [Тревер, 1959, с.113-114]. However, source analysis and the course of further events shows that the situation was not as clear-cut as K.V. Trever describes it.

In the global political struggle waged by Parthia and Rome who tried to control the main Eurasian routes, i.e. the three main routes of the Silk Road mentioned above, the small countries of the region located on the way of these routes were assigned the unenviable role of a bargaining chip. They used their geographic position to constantly balance between Rome and Parthia and preserve at least internal autonomy, if not absolute independence, through alliances, treaties, recognition of the supremacy, etc. A striking example of this is Atropatene. During the campaigns of Lucullus, Pompey, Crassus and Antony, it was an active ally of Parthia, but after Antony's failure at Fraaspa and his retreat, the king of Parthia Phraates IV tried to completely subjugate Atropatene. Then its ruler Artavasdes of Medes went to rapprochement with Rome in the person of Marcus Antonius. According to Plutarch, Antony visited Atropatene in 34 BC and entered into an alliance with Artavasdes by arranging a match between his son by Cleopatra and Artavasdes's daughter [Плутарх: Антоний, 53]. Similar fluctuations in the form of a "pendulum policy" are characteristic of all the small states of the South Caucasus and Western Asia during the period of the global confrontation between Parthia and Rome.

After defeating Antony and capturing Egypt in 30 BC, the policy of Rome in the East was continued by Octavian Augustus, who became the sole ruler of the vast Roman Empire. In Parthia, in the 20s of the 1st century BC, king Phraates IV and his brother Tiridates started confrontation. As a result, Tiridates fled to the Romans, taking with him the son of

Phraates IV. Augustus acted as a mediator in the brothers' struggle. He refused to give up Tiridates to Phraates using him as a second string to bow in the fight against Parthia, and in exchange for the return of Phraates' son, he demanded that Phraates IV return to Rome all the prisoners and the banners of the Roman legions, and his demand was fulfilled [Шифман, 1990, с.121].

Further, Octavian Augustus reenthroned in Atropatene Artavasdes deposed by Phraates IV and enthroned in Armenia Tigranes III who was brought up in Rome. In the same period, Octavian Augustus restored the position of Rome in the South Caucasus. In the so-called Inscriptions of Ancyra, he reports that the kings of the Albanians, Iberians and Medes also sought friendship with him through ambassadors [Тревер, 1959, с.116]. The Romans tightly controlled the situation in Armenia and Colchis, by deploying their legions here. After the death of Tigranes III, the attempt of Armenia, under the newly enthroned Tigranes IV and his sister Erato, to get out of the Roman control ended in disaster. Tigranes IV died in the struggle with the Romans, Erato abdicated the throne, and Augustus handed over the administration of Armenia to the king of Atropatene, the son of Artavasdes Artabazan II [Алиев, 1989, с.101]. There were no Roman troops in Iberia and Albania, sources report nothing about the intervention of Rome under Augustus in their affairs and, apparently, this situation was quite suitable for Rome. The situation stabilized and during almost the entire 1st century AD, there were no major military clashes between Rome and Parthia. But this is not to say that Parthia agreed with the weakening of its own positions and the strengthening of the Roman positions in Asia Minor and in the South Caucasus.

After the death of Augustus in 14AD, Parthia enthroned a representative of its Arsacid dynasty in Atropatene in 20 AD. The Roman era in Atropatene history ended and it returned to the Parthian fold [Алиев, 1989, с.104]. But when Parthia tried to "arsacidize" Armenia, Augustus' successor Tiberius strongly opposed it. Moreover, he persuaded the kings of Albania and Iberia to let nomads – Alans and Sarmatians – pass through the mountain passes of the Greater Caucasus under their control. Nomads defeated Parthia in 35 AD and ravaged many of its regions [Тревер, 1959, с.118-119]. Then, in the middle of the 1st century, Rome, in accordance with the principle of divide and rule, pushed Iberia against

Albania, openly supporting the former. Apparently, Albania, in order to somehow balance the situation, went to rapprochement with Parthia.

While there are no direct reports about this in written sources, as archeological data show, it was during this period that Albania was flooded with Parthian coins [Расулова, 2008, с.146] and burial ground types uncharacteristic for the local population appeared in Albania in the 1st–2nd centuries. These are burials in tombs made of raw bricks [Розендорф, 1906, с.86-108; Гуммель, 1940, с.145-160; Алиев, 1973, с.233-243; Гошгарлы, 2012, с.60-65] found in the territory of the modern Goygol district, not far from the right bank of the Kura, as well as burials in clay sarcophagi found in the territories adjacent to the left bank of the Kura [Халилов, 1985, с.86-89; Бабаев, 1990, с.106-108; Алиев, Османов, 1989, с.56-67; Гошгарлы, 2012, с.76-81]. Similar burial types are widespread and have a long historical tradition in the territory of Parthia [Литвинский, 1983, с.81-122; Литвинский, Седых, 1983, с.100-104]. All these burial grounds were found below Mingachevir, not far from the right and left banks of the Kura. There is no doubt that Parthia, in order to strengthen its hand in Albania, resettled here tribes from various regions of its state in a strategically important section of Albania, which makes it possible to control trade operations along the Strabo Road on its Albanian section. We do not know how great the influence of Parthia on Albania in the 1st century was, but the analysis of political events in the second half of the 1st century shows that relations were rather allied than vassal, and Albania could pursue an independent domestic and foreign policy.

In the second half of the 1st century BC, the North Caucasian nomadic tribes of Alans and Sarmatians became noticeably more active and Rome and Parthia had to stop fighting with each other and join forces in the struggle against the raids of nomads in the South Caucasus and within Parthia and the Roman provinces in Asia Minor.

In 68, Emperor Nero planned a large-scale campaign in Albania in order to establish control over the Derbent Pass, which was controlled by Albania. During that period Iberia was controlled by Rome, which ensured control over the Darial Pass. Albania, on the contrary, was in opposition to Rome because of its pro-Iberian position. Neither had Parthia effective control over Albania. In such a situation,

Albania, if necessary, could let the nomadic tribes pass through Derbent. It is not impossible that, at that time, Albania actually did not possess the necessary military resources in order to effectively restrain the nomads on its own.

Sources do not report the main purpose of this campaign. Tacitus notes that: "Nero sent many military units that he recruited in Germany, Britain and Illyria preparing for a war with the Albanians, to the Caspian gorges, but made them return" [Расулова, 2008, с.148] Another Roman historian Gaius Suetonius Tranquillus reports: "He also prepared a campaign to the Caspian Gates, recruited in Italy a new legion of young men six feet tall and named it "Phalanx of Alexander the Great" [Гай Светоний, 1966; Нерон, 19] Neither does scientific literature provide consensus about this. K.V. Trever does not exclude that, in addition to taking control over the Derbent Pass, Nero also wanted to punish Albania, which did not depend on anyone and could at its discretion let nomads pass through its lands [Тревер, 1959, с.121]. According to T.Mommsen, Tacitus simply confused the Alans with the Albanians, and Nero planned a campaign towards the Darial, and not the Derbent Pass [Моммзен, 1949, т.5, с.356]. A number of researchers believed that this planned campaign of Nero continued the policy laid down by Pompey to establish Roman control over the Trans-Caspian trade route [Кудрявцев, 1948, с.83-96; Расулова, 2008, с.148-149; Бокшанин, 1966, с.209].

We can hypothesize that one of the goals of Nero's planned campaign was to not allow Parthia to enthrone a representative of its Arsacid dynasty in Albania as it had done in Atropatene and Armenia. Rome realized that the excessive "arsacidization" of Western Asia and the South Caucasus strengthened the position of Parthia here to the detriment of Rome. As is known, the campaign did not take place because of Nero's death and four years later, in 72–74, the entire Western Asia was devastated by a grandiose raid of the Alano-Sarmatian tribes [Тревер, 1959, с.125].

But at the end of the 1st century, the Romans under Emperor Domitian nevertheless reached the shores of the Caspian Sea. This is evidenced by the famous Latin inscription in Gobustan, which states that "Under Emperor Domitian, Caesar, Augustus, Germanicus, Lucius Julius Maximus, centurion of the XII Legion of Fulminatus, made this inscription".

[Джафарзаде, 1948, с.304-311; Пахомов, 1949, с.86; Тревер, 1959, с.127].

Roman historian Gaius Suetonius Tranquillus, who gave a detailed description of Domitian's biography [Гай Светоний, 1966, с.210-220], does not report any of his campaigns to the East. Neither do other sources provide information about such a campaign. K.V.Trever suggests that the campaign was possibly associated with the beginning of the expansion of Albania itself to the south, and "not without the help of the Alans and other northern peoples and mountain tribes" [Тревер, 1959, с.128]. Perhaps Rome thus reminded Albania who ruled the roost. There are other versions of the reasons for the presence of Roman troops on the western coast of the Caspian Sea within Albania at the end of the 1st century, but all of them still remain scientific hypotheses and versions due to the complete silence of Roman and other sources on this matter.

In general, this inscription is interesting as it demonstrates Rome's continuing interest in Albania and it apparently tried, as far as possible, to keep the situation here under control. It should also be noted that the Caspian coast of Albania became the most eastern region where the Roman legions managed to penetrate in the entire history of Ancient Rome.

Generally speaking, in terms of the struggle between Parthia and Rome for leadership in Western Asia and the South Caucasus, the 1st century was in the favor of the Parthians. They were able to establish representatives of their Arsacid dynasty on the thrones of Atropatene and Armenia and make more friendly relations with Albania. But as early as at the very beginning of the 2nd century, Rome resumed its struggle with Parthia. Emperor Trajan not only defeated the Parthians, but captured and destroyed their capital Ctesiphon and reached the Persian Gulf [Тревер, 1959, с.129]. He turned Armenia, Bosphorus, Colchis and Iberia into Roman provinces, and gave the Albanians a king. It is quite obvious that Trajan approved the person who recognized the supremacy of Rome as the king of Albania. Thus, only Albania in the entire South Caucasus was not declared a Roman province. What was Trajan guided by when making such a decision, according to K.V.Trever "...is difficult, or rather impossible to say" [Тревер, 1959, с.129]. But this triumph of Rome was short-lived. In 117, Trajan died. After him, the systemic expansion of Rome to the east as a whole was terminated, except for some short-term military actions with

local goals in the form of the campaigns of Septimius Severus (198) and Caracalla (215). Rome shifted from conquests to defending its borders.

Trajan's successor, Emperor Hadrian, withdrew troops from Parthia, establishing the traditional border with it along the Euphrates. He withdrew troops from Armenia, re-enthroning the Arsacid dynasty. Hadrian's biographer Aelius Spartianus noted that he "...had most friendly relations with the Albanians and Iberians, and generously gave gifts to their kings, while they neglected (the invitation) to come to him" [Трубец, 1959, с.130].

Since the 2nd century, the headache of Rome had been the Germanic tribes. Rome had to abandon

an active policy in the East, and in order to preserve trade with the East for the Roman merchants along the Silk Road routes, it had to maintain stable friendly relations both with Parthia and practically with all other states of Western Asia and the South Caucasus.

In the early 3rd century, the Arsacid dynasty that reigned in Parthia was replaced by a new Sassanian dynasty. A new era began, which gave rise to new global political players represented first by early feudal Turkic empires and then by the Arab Caliphate, who continued to compete for control over the routes of the Great Silk Road.

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Isgandarov Emil*Leading Research Fellow of the Ancient Archaeology Department of the Institute of Archaeology, Ethnography and Anthropology of ANAS, PhD in History*

NORTHERN AZERBAIJAN AND ACHAEMENIDS: FORMULATION OF PROBLEMATIC ISSUES

On the territory of Northern Azerbaijan, at the end of the 4th–beginning of the 3rd centuries BC, the state of Caucasian Albania emerged. This is evidenced by both written sources and archaeological materials found at the sites of Albania [Бабаев, 1976, с.40-51]. Caucasian Albania mainly covered the territory of the modern Republic of Azerbaijan, parts of Eastern Georgia (Alazani Valley), modern Armenia and southern Dagestan.

Written sources covering the ancient period of the Albanian state are presented mainly by Greco-Latin authors, whose reports did not cover the entire spectrum of socio-economic and political life of the population and created a large lacuna for historians, because these reports, which are somewhat contradictory and incomplete, paved way for various interpretations of researchers in the field of Albanian studies [Алиев, 1975, с.150-165].

Various tribes lived on the territory of Albania, as Strabo tells us: “Now, one king reigns over all, but earlier each nation with a special dialect had its own king; they have twenty-six dialects” [Страбон, XI, IV, 6]. Of course, by the period of Strabo, the consolidation of these tribes under the leadership of the Albanians had already taken place long ago. It is interesting that the Albanians themselves first appear in the historical arena in connection with the campaign of Alexander the Great to the East, namely, in the Battle of Gaugamela.

In his work, Arrian, who covers these events, reports on the presence of a contingent of Albanian troops during the Battle of Gaugamela. Along with the Albanians, other tribes are also mentioned that also live on the territory of the future Albania [Аппиан, 1962, III, 8; 13].

Pliny the Elder in his work reports on the contact between Alexander the Great and the Albanian king, and that the Albanian king presented dogs to Alexander [Гай Плиний Секунд, VIII, 149]. The same evidence is available from Solin, whose work is, in

principle, considered a compiled work, and probably this information was taken from Pliny the Elder himself [Гай Юлий Солин, XV, 6].

An important issue in this context is the political history of historical (Northern) Azerbaijan before the formation of the Albanian state. What was the role of these territories in relation to the Achaemenid state?

As you know, in the middle of the 6th century BC, putting an end to the Median kingdom, a representative of the Achaemenid dynasty, Cyrus II laid the foundation of a new empire – the Achaemenid empire. The expansion of this state, started by Cyrus II, was successfully continued by his descendants. The Achaemenid state reached its highest power during the reign of Darius I, whose activities are reflected, in particular, in the Behistun inscription. His reign is also well covered in the “History” of Herodotus, who, in particular, reports that the Achaemenid king divided the territory of the state into 20 satrapies. Each satrapy included certain peoples and regions, and each of these satrapies had to pay taxes in a predetermined amount. Here, the information of Herodotus about the nature of the composition of these satrapies is important: “Many neighboring peoples were united into one satrapy, and sometimes, in addition to the closest neighbors, the peoples of another, more distant satrapy joined it” [Геродот, 1999, III, 89]. The boundaries of the satrapies did not correspond to the ethnopolitical boundaries of the peoples living within the empire.

Another important issue is the question of the northern borders of the empire, namely, whether the lands of the South Caucasus were part of the Achaemenids, and if so, what satrapies they were represented by. Herodotus reports the following: “Even the Colchians and their neighbors living up to the Caucasus Range (Persian empire extends to these borders, while the regions north of the Caucasus are not subject to the Persians) pay tribute in the form of

voluntary gifts. So, these peoples continue to send 100 boys and 100 girls to the king" [Геродот, 1999, III, 97].

This information of Herodotus was interpreted by researchers in different ways. For a long time, the lack of evidence of the archaeological presence of the Achaemenids in the South Caucasus gave rise to doubts about the inclusion of these territories within the Achaemenids. The concept of archaeological presence did not mean individual finds of things and not even the influence of the Achaemenids on the culture of the peoples living here. We are talking here directly about the presence of remnants of administrative structures, which could serve as a vivid evidence of the presence of the Achaemenids in the Caucasus. Of course, some Achaemenids objects could have been received as gifts or exchange. The same can be said about the influence of culture; some peoples could have been influenced by culture without being part of it. The presence of the same administrative structures serves as a more reasoned argument for the confirmation of the political dominance of the Achaemenids.

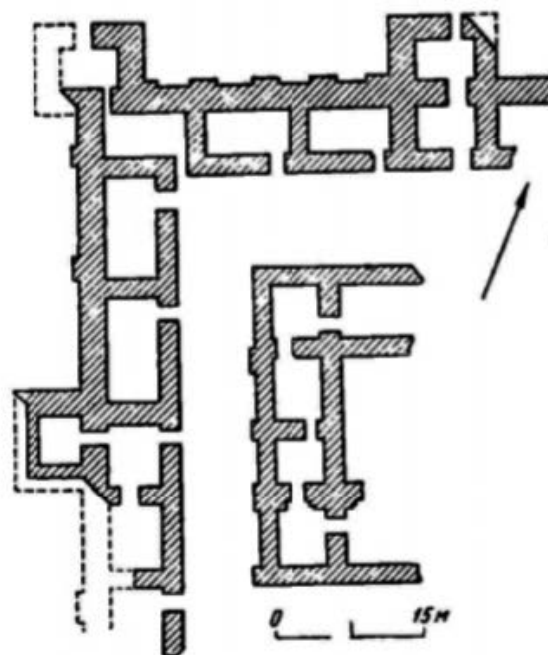
On the territory of historical Azerbaijan, for the first time, the remnants of the Achaemenid administrative structure were revealed in Gazakh. As a result of archaeological excavations, the surviving part of the structure, consisting of two parts, was revealed here (Fig. I: 1). The similarities of this structure with elements of Achaemenid architecture were immediately noticed. In addition to the preserved walls made of raw bricks, two bell-shaped stone column bases (the so-called Persepolian version) were found here (Table II: 2) [Нариманов, 1960, с.162-164; Исмаилзаде, 2002, с.30-38]. Without going into the architectural details of this structure, we note that the revealed remains were the first breakthrough in the issue of archaeological tracing of the Achaemenid domination in the territory of historical Azerbaijan.

Unfortunately, the remains of the building at Saritepe have not been completely preserved. Much of this palace was destroyed during work carried out by a brick production factory.

The results of the excavations of the Garajamirli complex play a significant role in this question. The Garajamirli complex is located near the village of Garajamirli in the Shamkir region of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Archaeological excavations at this site have been conducted since 2006 and continue to this day [Искендеров, Кнауц, Каниут, 2019, с.115-128; Babayev, Gagosidse, Knauf, 2006, s.291-330; Knauss, Babayev, s.111-122; Babayev, Knauf, Bär..., 2010, s.237-266; Knauf, Gagosidze, Babayev, 2013, s.1-28].

At this stage of our research, we can say that the Garajamirli complex consists of several interconnected structures. The landmarks of this complex are the palace building located on the Gurbantepe hill, as well as the propylaea located on the Idealtepe hill from where the main entrance to the palace went. The palace is quite large.

In addition to the main palace, the complex includes such buildings as Rizvantepe, Idealtepe, the Northern complex, etc. (Fig. II: 1)



1



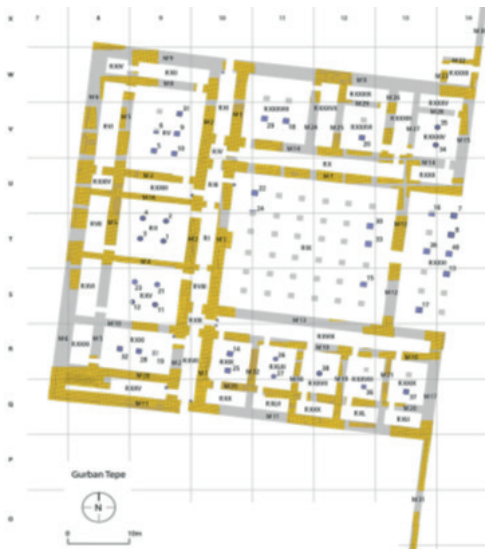
2

Fig. I:

1. Plan of the preserved part of the Saritepe building;
2. The base of the column from Saritepe (from the article by Narimanov I.G. Finding the bases of the columns of the 5th-4th centuries BC in Azerbaijan) // CA, 1960 № 4, p.162-164)



1



2

Fig. II:

1. General plan of the monuments of the Garajamirli complex;
2. Plan of the Gurbantepe palace

It should be noted that the Garajamirli complex is unique and has no analogies in the territory of the South Caucasus. As a result of the excavations of the main palace on Gurbantepe, it was possible to practically completely reconstruct the plan of this structure (Fig. II: 2). It is interesting that a relatively small number of artifacts were found on the territory of the palace. In addition, the presence of incomplete column bases was of particular concern. Master masons had worked on site and made the column bases in the palace. The Gurbantapa Palace is also remarkable for the fact that various types of column bases were identified here: one-level, two-level and bell-shaped (Fig. III: 1, 2; Fig. IV: 1-3). Unfortunately, not all of the column bases have survived. Most of the column bases located in the reception hall was destroyed at a later time.

It seems to us that the presence of such a complex on the territory of historical Azerbaijan should not have left room for doubts about the incorporation of these territories into the Achaemenid state. It should be noted that the Garajamirli complex, due to its geographical location, is relatively close to the Saritepe palace. And if we also take into account other similar monuments found on the territory of the South Caucasus, namely the remains of the Achaemenid structures of Gumbati or Benjamin, then a fairly clear picture of the Achaemenid domination in the South Caucasus is formed.

But here new questions arise: 1) the dating of the monuments, and first of all the Garajamirli complex, because in terms of its size, preservation and, accordingly, its significance is more significant than the other monuments; 2) the location of these palaces, close enough to each other; what is the reason for the absence of similar monuments upstream of the Kura River; 3) when did these territories become part of the Achaemenid state; 4) which satrapies were these territories, most importantly, the territories of historical Azerbaijan included in.

The main palace of the Garajamirli complex has very similar features to the palace of Xerxes in Persepolis [Искендеров, Кнаусс, Каниут, 2019, с.118; Knauss, Babayev, 2016, с.70-76]. This similarity could indicate the construction of this structure during the Xerxes period. But, of course, this region must have been conquered earlier, perhaps during the period of Darius I. Although the palace in Gurbantepe, which roughly replicates the palace of Xerxes, should date accordingly to the years of his reign, it seems to us that the construction of the complex must have begun earlier, in the period of Darius. Under Xerxes, the construction of the complex continued, and most likely, the construction of the palace itself started. We mean that the main palace began to be built later than other structures of the complex, which are the buildings on Rizvantepe or Idealtepe, etc. But this is just a hypothesis that requires further research. We believe that even during the time of Xerxes, the construction of this palace was not possible, as mentioned above. We think the reasons for this could be different. On the one hand, this could be due to the construction activities in the center of the empire, on the other hand, it could be due to political events taking place in the empire, namely the uprisings that Xerxes had to fight [Дандамаев, Луконин, 1980, с.106-107].

As was mentioned, the main structures of the Achaemenid era are located below the Kura. Of course, the Kura River was very important,

including in transportation. In addition, it played the role of a natural barrier in the event of an attack from the north. But it seems to us that there was another important point here. The choice of the location of the satrap palaces on the territory of Azerbaijan could be associated with the compact residence of the Scythian tribes in these territories. In the scientific literature there have long been debates about the existence in the 7th century BC of the so-called Scythian kingdom, which, according to some researchers, included the lands south of the Kura. However, there are also opponents of this hypothesis [Дьяконов, 2008, с.255-266; Алиев, 1979, с.4-14; Халилов, 1971, с.183-187]. Without going into the details of this polemic, we note that regardless of whether this kingdom existed here or not, part of the Scythians or their relatives, Cimmerians, could have settled on this territory. Scythian items were found in Gazakh, Shamkir and Mingachevir. Strabo mentions the Sakasena region. [Страбон, XI, VIII, 4] Sakasenians, in addition to everything, are mentioned in the Battle of Gaugamela along with the Albanians [Аппиан, III, 8]. Perhaps the choice of places for the construction of the central structures of the satrapies is associated with the political strengthening in the territories inhabited by the Scythians or with related tribes.

Herodotus mentions several satrapies which could be localized on the territory of historical Azerbaijan, or satrapies which could include these mentioned territories. A priori, these territories of Azerbaijan could have been part of the 10th, 11th and 15th satrapies. According to Herodotus, the 10th satrapy included: "Ecbatana, the rest of the Media, Paricanians and Orthocorybantes", "the Caspians, the Pausicae, the Pantimathi and the Daritae" were included in the 11th satrapy, and the 15th satrapy included "the Saka and the Caspians" [Геродот, III, 92- 93].

It should be noted that the Herodotus' list does not say anything about the Albanians. The reasons for this could be different. According to a number of researchers, the Albanians could have been hiding under the name of the Caspians [Тревер, 1959, с.30]. An interesting hypothesis, in this regard, was put forward by G.Goshgarly, in whose opinion the Albanians could not be mentioned due to their exemption from taxes that were usually paid by the rest of the subordinate peoples. According to the researcher, this was due to the fact that the Albanians were involved in the protection of the northern borders of the empire in connection with the possible campaigns of nomads [Гошгарлы, 2012, с.225-230; Гошгарлы, 2001, с.143-145].

In the 11th and 15th satrapies, the Caspians are mentioned. An early mention of the Caspians is also found in Aramaic documents from the Elephantine Island [Меликов, 2003, с.91-102]. The Caspians are also mentioned in the works of Strabo.

In the 11th and 15th satrapies, the Orthocorybantians and the Saka people are mentioned. I.M.Dyakonov, quoting the literal translation of Herodotus of the Orthocorybantians from the ancient Persian word "tigraxauda", which means "pointy hoods", speaks of the Scythian population in the Median satrapy [Дьяконов, 2008, с.260]. The author identified these "pointy hooded" ones with the Saka of antique sources [Дьяконов, 2008, с.437], and located the territory inhabited by these tribes, i.e. Sakasena "south of the middle course of the Kura,



Fig. III:
1. Bell-shaped base from Gurbantepe;
2. Two-level bases from Gurbantepe



Fig. IV:
1, 2, 3 - Raw brick walls and column bases of Gurbantepe

approximately in the area of present-day Kirovabad (Ganja)" [Дьяконов, 2008, с.262].

Other researchers agree with the localization of the "pointed hooded" Saka in the territory of Azerbaijan [Алиев, 1989, с.51; Меликов, 2003, с.49]. In the scientific literature, the "pointed hooded" Saka are most often localized on the territory of Central Asia, and in general, Herodotus' information is considered erroneous. I.M.Dyakonov, referring to the issue, indicates that the localization of the "pointed hooded" Saka on the territory of Media or Asia Minor may be due to the simple reason of their settling in different places during their campaigns [Дандамев, 2013, с.193]. However, some adherents of the Central Asian localization of the "pointed hooded" Scythians, agreeing with the idea of their residence on the territory of Media, associated this with their possible resettlement to Media from Central Asia [Балахванцев, 2019, с.260-261].

In the opinion of Rauf Melikov, the "Transcaucasian Saka", who created the Scythian kingdom in their time, are the Saka mentioned by Herodotus in the 10th satrapy. According to the author, the Saka mentioned with the Caspians, like the latter, were associated with shipbuilding, which is evidenced, in particular, by the Babylonian text of the Cambyses period. The Saka mentioned in this document are the "Transcaucasian Saka" [Меликов, 2003, с.103]. M.A.Dandamaev, however, believes that the Saka, along with the Persians and the Medes, should have been engaged in "protecting ships" on ships in the event of a possible revolt [Дандамев, 2013, с.203].

Another satrapy that could include the territories of historical Azerbaijan is the 14th satrapy, which, according to Herodotus, included "Sagartians, Sarangians, Thamanaeans, Utians, Myci and the inhabitants of the Red Island" [Геродот, III, 93]. The Utians mentioned by Herodotus is rightly identified with the Utians mentioned by late Greco-Latin sources in Albania. The name of the Myci of this satrapy has been preserved, according to

researchers, in particular, in the name of the region of Mugan. Proceeding from this, it is assumed that the territory of Azerbaijan south of the Kura River was part of the 14th satrapy [Меликов, 2003, с.117, 122]. It is possible that the remains of the building once discovered in Garatapa were the remains of the administrative building of this satrapy [Исмизаде, 1965, с.72-86].

Thus, as can be seen from the above text, several satrapies mentioned by Herodotus can be localized on the territory of historical Azerbaijan. Of course, this issue requires further study. At the same time, the presence of several administrative buildings of the Achaemenids identified in the territory of Northern Azerbaijan, which were undoubtedly the centers of satrapies, can help in solving this problem in the future.

The territories of Northern Azerbaijan, which were part of the Achaemenid state, constituted the main part of the Albanian state after the former's collapse. The Achaemenid culture that took root here continues to be observed in subsequent periods too. Undoubtedly, the tribes living on the territory of both Northern and Southern Azerbaijan played a role in the formation of this culture. It should be noted that the architectural tradition of the Achaemenids in Azerbaijan does not continue. The structures of Albania created in the subsequent period after the collapse of the Achaemenid Empire are fundamentally different. An example is the oval structures of Gabala [Babayev, 2010, s.183-186; Babayev və diq., 2012, s.213-219; Бабаев, 1990, с.62-101].

We believe that the question of the inclusion of the territories of North and South Azerbaijan into the Achaemenid Empire should not raise doubts. As a result of the collapse of this empire, states such as Albania and Atropatena were formed on the territory of historical Azerbaijan. Unfortunately, the written sources do not cover all the issues of interest to us. As a result, archaeological research plays a leading role here. Subsequent archaeological excavations will expand our knowledge in this area.

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Jabiyev Gafar

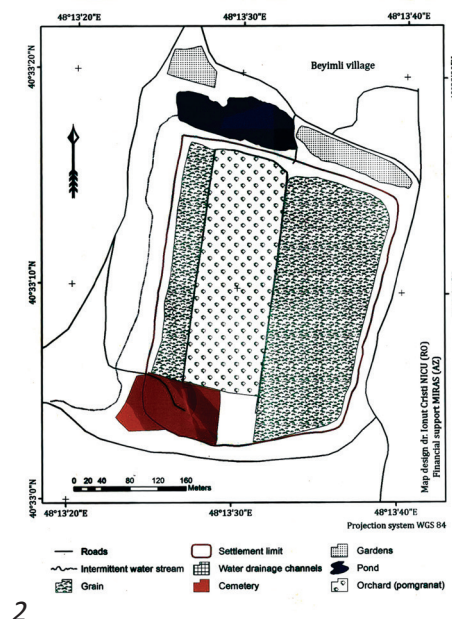
Chief Researcher of the Early Medieval Archaeology Department of the Institute of Archaeology, Ethnography and Anthropology of ANAS, Doctor of Historical Sciences, Professor

MEHRAVAN: A NEW PAGE IN THE STUDY OF THE HISTORY OF THE CAUCASIAN ALBANIA

Albania, one of the ancient states of the South Caucasus, occupied a large area surrounded by Sarmatia in the north, Iberia in the west, Atropatene in the southeast, and the Caspian Sea in the east, as shown in antique and early medieval sources. According to Movses Khorenatsi, Albania was a large country covering the entire East Caucasus. According to most primary sources, the Kura River flowed through Albania, dividing it into two parts [Страбон, 1964, s.475]. Albania was divided into separate provinces and districts, covering both the right and left banks of the Kura River. It should be noted that among researchers, who have studied the historical geography of Albania to varying degrees, Z.M.Bunyadov [Bünyadov, 1989; Буниятов, 1964, с.87-92], N.M. Valikhanli [Vəlixanlı, 1974], V.Piriyev [Piriyev, 2002], M.Kh.Sharifli [Şərifli, 1962, s.89-93], F.J.Mammadova [Məmmədova, 1993], G.A.Geybullayev [Гейбуллаев, 1991] and some other authors have certain views on the localization of separate administrative-political units. However, there still remain gaps and rather serious differences of opinion regarding the localization of individual administrative-political units. Unfortunately, in many cases, amateurs, who have nothing to do with science, have further complicated the situation by writing down what came to their minds. In our opinion, the most serious flaw and shortcoming in the reports on the historical geography of Azerbaijan in the early Middle Ages is that the primary source information has not been sufficiently studied in relation to modern natural and geographical realities, historical and archaeological monuments, toponyms of ancient origin, settlement areas of various ethno-national units, and finally, rich folklore heritage. Whereas these factors must be taken into account when writing the historical geography of individual administrative-political units.

The province of Girdiman, which occupied an important place in the economic, military, political, religious and cultural life of Albania, was first mentioned in the sources of the late 4th and 5th centuries. We find information about Girdiman in the writings of Koryun, Faustus of Byzantium, and then Movses Khorenatsi, bishop Sebeos and Elisha. The "History of Albania" by Albanian historian Movses Kaghankatvatsi examines the history of Girdiman in more detail.

It is noteworthy that in this work of the Albanian historian, along with the province of Girdiman, we find information about the city of Girdiman, the principality of Girdiman, the holy house of God in Girdiman and, finally, the diocese of Girdiman. Much of this information is very important in terms of the localization of the Girdiman area. For example, according to M.Kaghankatvatsi, Mehran, a descendant of the Mihranids, fled with



Pic. 1. Aerial view and topographic plan of Bayimli fortress (Mehravan) (Agsu district)

30,000 families and decided to join the Khazars by crossing the territory of Albania in order to escape the revenge of the Sassanid ruler Khosrow II. To prevent Mehran's attempt, the Sassanid ruler sent the following letter to him: "Brother, if you do not like to live with me, take as much land to live in Albania as the distance you have covered by the time this letter reaches you" [Kalankatli, 1993, s.101]. According to M.Kaghankatvatsi, this letter reached Mehran "in the hilly province of Girdiman" and he, "looking at the mild nature of these places, built a city there with great pleasure and named it Mehravan" [Kalankatli, 1993, s.101]. In our opinion, these

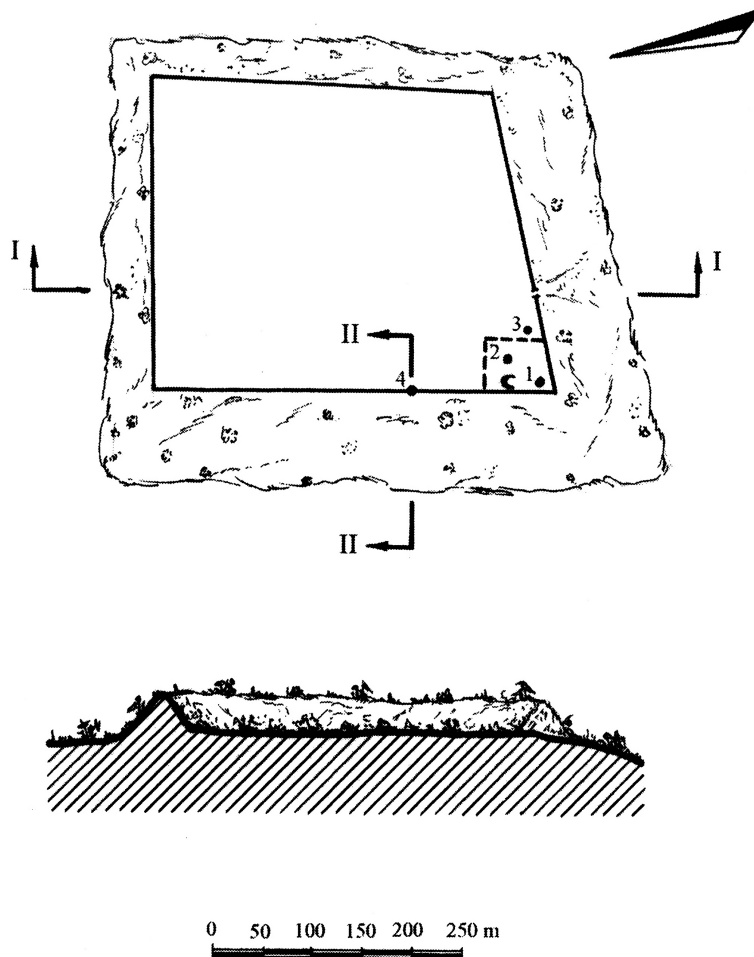
records of the Albanian historian are important from the point of view of the localization of Girdiman in the territory of Shirvan, only because Mehran had to pass through Shirvan on his way to the north to join the Khazars, as it was the closest road from Iran to Derbent. Apparently, Mehran and his supporters were not unaware that the Khazar raids and incursions into the imperial territories were carried out mainly along this route.

Obviously, this information of the Albanian historian is a very serious reason to believe that the Girdiman province, including the city of Mehravan, was located in the territory of Shirvan. In this sense, the localization of the city of Mehravan remained a very important scientific problem facing historians.

As we know, since the 1950s, extensive research has been carried out focusing on the archaeological study of the history of the ancient and medieval cities of Azerbaijan. However, it should be acknowledged that the location of several Azerbaijani cities mentioned in ancient and medieval sources, some of which even have known geographic coordinates, still remains a mystery to science [Cəbiyev, 2010, s.134-136]. There are also a number of ancient and medieval urban sites, and it is yet to be determined which of the cities mentioned in the historical sources these sites belong to.

Mehravan is one of the early medieval Azerbaijani cities, which is mentioned in historical sources, especially in the "History of Albania" by M.Kaghankatvatsi, but its exact location is still unknown. However, certain assumptions about the

location of Mehravan have already been expressed in the historical and archeological literature [Cəbiyev, 2003 s.113-119]. The interesting part is that so far, all the monuments believed to be the remains of the city of Mehravan are in the territory of Shirvan. Another early medieval monument discovered in the territory of Agsu district in 2004 and presumed to be the remains of the city of Mehravan by the author of these lines – the Bayimli fortress (locals call this monument Torpaggala) – should be added to this list. It should be noted that the Bayimli fortress is the third monument on the archeological map of Azerbaijan known as Torpaggala. As we know,



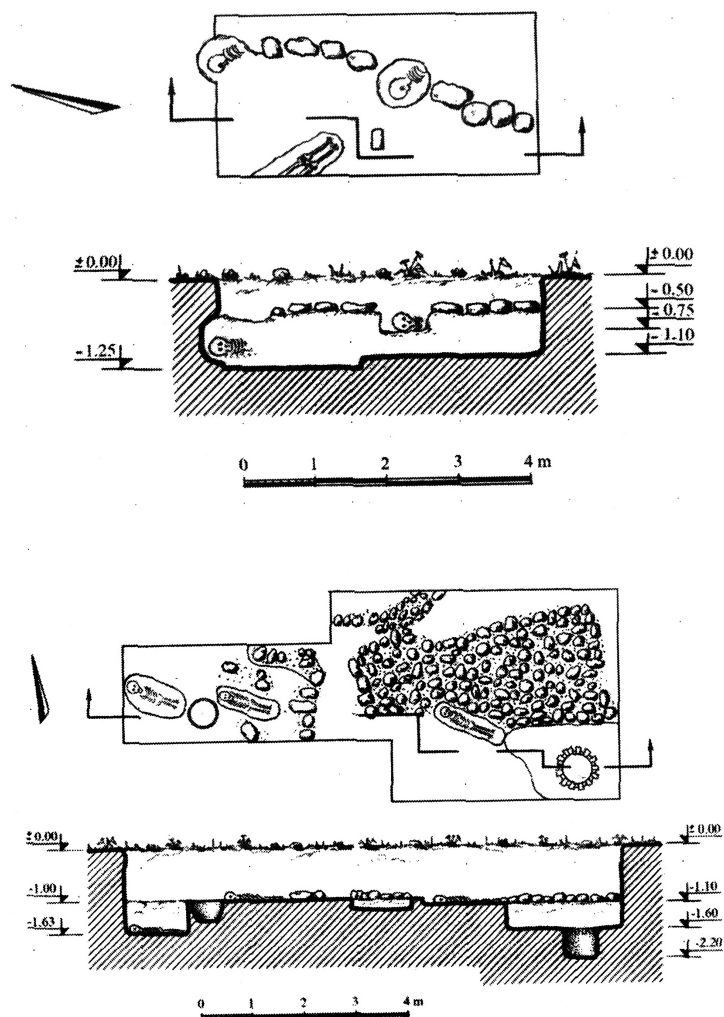
Pic. 2. Restoration sketch of Bayimli fortress (Mehravan)

there are medieval monuments known as Torpaggala in the territories of Gakh and Tovuz districts. It is also said that there is a city called Torpaggala dating back to the 3rd–6th centuries in Central Asia.

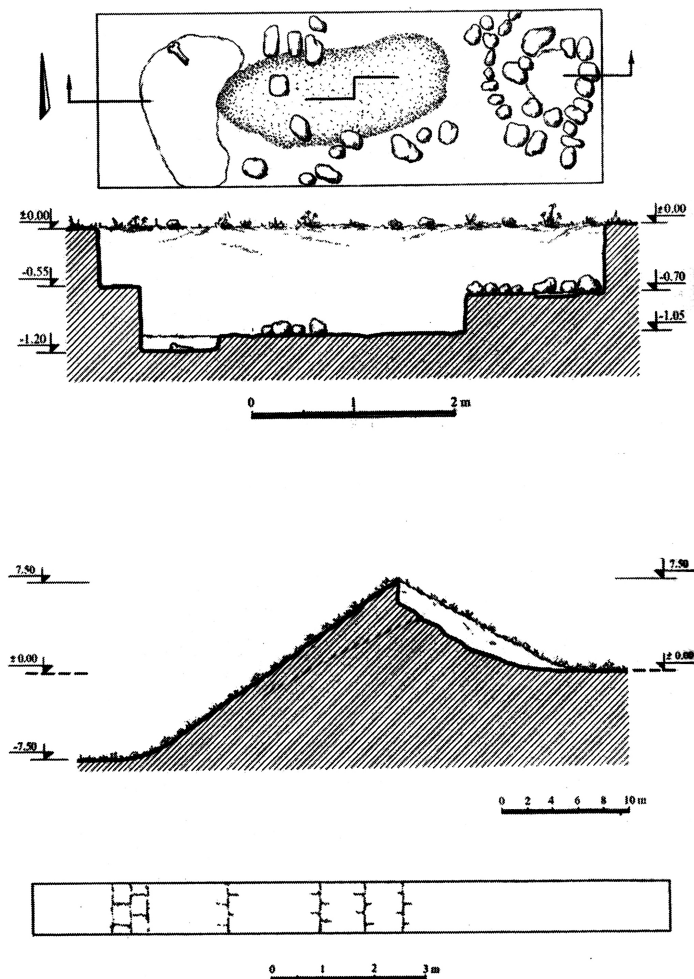
The territory of the Torpaggala monument, which is located south of the Garamaryam ridge in the territory of Bayimli village of Agsu district on the left bank of the Girdiman river, is about 9 hectares (Pic. 1-2). It is surrounded by a fortress wall, embankment, 10–15 m high. The length of the northern walls of the rectangular monument is 323 m, the length of the southern walls is 295 m, the length of the eastern walls is 338 m, and the length of the western walls is 405 m. Positions of high towers are clearly noticeable in the corners. It is interesting that the height of the fortress walls from the outside is twice the height from the inside. This happened because the soil on the outside of the fortress walls was dug out and accumulated on the fortress wall. Thus, as the walls of the fortress got higher and higher, its outer side became deeper and deeper, turning into a kind of impassable trench. This is undoubtedly one of the factors that make it easier to defend the city [Babayev, Əhmədov, 1981, s.26-28; Cəbiyev, 2015, s.25-26].

It is believed that the main entrance gates of the Bayimli fortress are located on the southern and western sides. The territory of the fortress has been plowed for many years to plant cotton and grain. In the 1960s, the area of the fortress was plowed to a depth of about 60–70 cm to grow grapes. In the process, many artifacts of material culture were discovered. Surprisingly, such a majestic monument was successively destroyed for many years due to farming activities, and local authorities failed to inform the relevant organizations about this in a timely manner. Thus, many valuable relics of our history were lost while passing from hand to hand. What is even more surprising is that such an important monument has been overlooked by the scientific community as a whole. That is, we do not find the name of the Bayimli fortress in historical and archeological works, or on maps, or in encyclopedic publications, or even in the list of historical and cultural monuments approved by the Ministry of Culture and protected by the state. Nor was its name included in the collection entitled “Distribution, by importance, of immovable historical and cultural monuments taken under state protection in the territory of the Republic of Azerbaijan,” approved by the 2 August 2001 decision No.132 of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

The first report on the existence of such a monument was an article entitled “Torpaggala: a forgotten treasure” published in the newspaper Communist in 1991 by journalist Tahir Aydinoglu based on information



Pic. 3.
1- Bayimli fortress (Mehranvan): Plan and cross section of the 1st excavation site



Pic. 4.

- 1- Bayimli fortress (Mehran): Plan and cross section of the 3rd excavation site
- 2- Bayimli fortress (Mehran): Plan and cross section of the 4th excavation site

from Haji Gudrat Piriye, a correspondent of the newspaper *Khalg* (People) [Cəbiyev, 2010, s.136]. At the initiative of the author of these lines, a story about the Bayimli fortress was included in the historical documentary “Girdiman” filmed by the Azerbaijan State Television in 2003. Finally, in May 2004, under the direction of the author of these lines, preliminary exploratory archeological research was carried out in the Bayimli fortress. The task of the expedition organized for this purpose was, first of all, to determine the nature and age of the monument. To clarify these issues, a test pit was dug in four locations on the southwest side of the fortress, in an area where no grain had been planted.

It should be noted that this territory is a village cemetery fenced off by the municipality of the Bayimli village, and therefore, no farming activities have been carried out here in recent years.

In the course of the preliminary archeological studies, it was found out that the cultural layer of the monument was completely destroyed to a depth of 45–50 cm from the surface of the earth during continuous farming activities in the area. This is evidenced by the fragments of stone and brick found in this layer, as well as numerous fragments of various types of artifacts of material culture. Remains of rock-paved roads and sidewalks started to appear from a depth of 50 cm (Pic. 3, Fig. 2). When a depth of 90–100 cm was reached, hearth remains and several Muslim graves were discovered (Pic. 3, Fig. 1). Most of the finds are unglazed ceramics. The dimensions of the baked brick samples found only in the upper layer of the excavation are as follows: 22 cm x 21 cm x 6 cm; 25 cm x 24 cm x 6 cm.

One of the main tasks of the 2004 studies was to clarify some issues related to the fortress walls of the monument. To this end, it was firstly required to carry out appropriate measurements on the fortress walls. Then we cut a 90-cm-wide section into the fortress wall/embankment starting from the highest point inward. The result was more interesting than expected. It turned out that the defense system of the fortress, which was initially assumed to consist entirely of earthen embankment, actually consisted of several layers of raw brick walls. These walls, which are about 1.2–1.5 m apart from each other, were built stepwise, parallel to each other, and the space between them was filled with soil. This, in turn, ensured the strength of both the walls and the embankment. For the construction of the fortress walls, mainly raw bricks measuring 42 cm x 35 cm x 15 cm and containing a mixture of straw were used (Pic. 4, Fig. 2). These bricks were probably cut from the soil of the area along the outer perimeter of the fortress walls, which was dug and turned into a trench.

It should be noted that such raw bricks containing a mixture of straw were more typical of Sassanid architecture [Cəbiyev, 2005, s.215-226].

It is also worth noting the scientific significance of a stone column pedestal that attracted the attention of the expedition members during the 2004 studies. According to locals, the pedestal found

in farmland south of the fortress was discovered in the 1970s while the area was being planted and was thrown away to clear the area. The 45 cm-high pedestal was made of porous stone with a relatively soft texture. Its width is 75 cm at the bottom and 65 cm at the top. It is similar in shape to the antique stone pedestals found in Gabala. The difference is that this discovery is a bit roughly-made compared to the known samples from Gabala. Such majestic stone pedestals were commonly used as a specific architectural element in large public buildings.

In 2013, at the initiative and with the financial support of the Miras (Heritage) Public Union, archeological excavations were resumed at the site of the Mehravan city. The Agsu archeological expedition of the Institute of Archeology and Ethnography of ANAS led by the author of these lines initially conducted reconnaissance searches in a fairly large area. As a result of the searches, a lot of construction remains, industrial hearths and other artifacts of material culture dating to the 5th–8th centuries were found in the area (Pic. 5, Fig. 2).

Among the finds, a large clay trough (length 130 cm, width 76 cm, depth 75 cm) deserves special attention (Pic. 7, Fig. 2). It should be noted that this is the first such find in Azerbaijan.

In 2014, large-scale studies were launched in the Mehravan city site. Initially, the top layer of the 1,500-square-meter cultural layer, which was destroyed during the farming activities, was removed (Pic. 5, Fig. 1). In the course of the studies, construction remains, industrial hearths and numerous cultural artifacts (mainly ceramic, metal and stone products) attracting attention with their local features were successively discovered in the non-damaged portions of the cultural layer. Among the finds, there are several copper and silver coins. These are mainly Sassanid and Byzantine coins. This discovery is of particular importance in terms of studying the history of the Mehravan city and its trade and cultural ties (Pic. 10).

Several backgammon dice and checkers found during the 2014 excavations are also of scientific interest (Pic. 9, Fig. 6-7). The numerous large household jars found in the area are believed to have been used to store food and wine (Pic. 6).

The studies conducted in the Bayimli fortress in 2015 were also memorable with interesting findings. In this regard, a gold ring with a precious stone and a gold chain link are of particular interest (Pic. 10).

Based on the preliminary archeological studies carried out in the Bayimli fortress, the following conclusion can be drawn:

1. The fortification of the outer perimeter of the Bayimli fortress with magnificent fortress walls typical of first medieval cities, the presence of active life inside the fortress for at least several centuries and a large number of industrial remains, farming and household tools found here suggest that the Bayimli fortress was one of the early medieval cities of Azerbaijan.



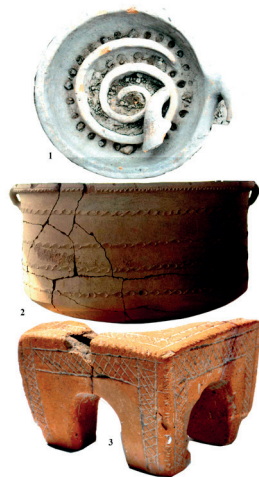
1



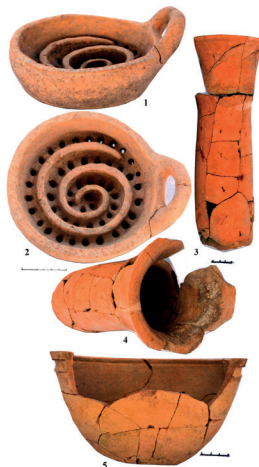
Pic. 5. Exploratory excavations at the site of Mehravan city (2013)



Pic. 6. Archeological finds buried underground (Mehravan)



Pic. 7. Ceramic artifacts dating to the early Middle Ages (Mehranan)



Pic. 8. Household ceramic ware dating to the early Middle Ages (Mehranan)

2. Based on the test pits, it was established that the Bayimli fortress is a single-layer monument. The urban life here began in the early 6th century and ended in the early 9th century. This is fully confirmed by the abundance of baked bricks in the upper portion of the layer, the discovery of individual glazed pottery fragments, and, finally, the fact that the cultural layer is cut by early Muslim graves. In other words, the beginning of life in the Bayimli fortress chronologically coincides with the arrival of the Mehranids in Albania, and the end of life here coincides with the completion of the occupation of the Albanian territories by the Caliphate armies. Thus, the Bayimli fortress is one of the Azerbaijani cities founded during the Mehranid period.

3. In our opinion, the Bayimli fortress corresponds more to the Mehravan city in terms of its chronological framework and geographical coordinates. As is known, the Mehravan city mentioned in medieval sources was founded during the arrival of Mehranids in Albania.

4. Interestingly, the names of the Mehravan and Girdiman cities are mentioned only in exclusively early medieval sources or historical sources directly related to the early Middle Ages. Later sources do not mention them at all. This, of course, could be due to the cessation of life there. Apparently, after the death of Mehran, the name Mehravan was gradually forgotten and during its subsequent discovery, it was given the name "Girdiman," the name of the province on the territory of which and the river on the banks of which the city was located. Academician Z.M.Bunyadov included Girdiman in the list of "second category cities of medium size, i.e. closed cities." According to him, "this remote city located far from the main trade routes, was not only a center of craftsmanship and trade, but also a fortress where military units were kept" [Bunyadov, 1989, s.142]. According to academician N.M.Valikhanli, along with the military units of local rulers, their residences were also located in the Girdiman city [Azərbaycan tarixi, 1998, s.47]. S.P.Tolstov quotes al-Masoudi as saying that there is a city called Girdiman in Central Asia, as well [Толстов, 1948, с.232]. To the above, it should be added that the existence of the Bayimli fortress and the source information about Mehravan also coincide chronologically. On the contrary, after the cessation of life in the Bayimli fortress, reports about Mehravan also gradually ceased. Are these coincidences?

5. Finally, in our view, the discovery of another magnificent city site on the banks of the Girdiman river dating to the political reign of Mehranids – feudal lords of Girdiman – in Albania can also be regarded as new solid evidence that the opinions that the Girdiman province was entirely located in the territory of Shirvan and not on the west or north-west of Albania are more convincing.

In conclusion, it should be noted that the thesis that the territory of the Girdiman province was located to the west of Albania was first introduced to the scientific literature in the late 1930s by Armenian scholar, academician S.T.Yeremyan, the head of the Caucasus Studies Department of the USSR Institute of Oriental Studies. Of course, the intention behind this was to create a scientific basis for future territorial claims of Armenians to Azerbaijan. Although some Azerbaijani historians have opposed this thesis since the 1950s, amid pressure and threats from Moscow, they have not been able to demonstrate a sufficiently consistent and principled

position on this issue. For example, in the draft three-volume “History of Azerbaijan” published in 1954, the territories of Girdiman were localized in the Shirvan region, or more precisely in the basin of the Girdiman river [Макет. История Азербайджана, с.49]. In the three-volume “History of Azerbaijan” published in 1958, the Girdiman territories were localized in the west of Albania without providing any serious grounds [Azərbaycan tarixi, 1958, s.113].

All this suggests that determining the location of the Mehravan city and carrying out fundamental scientific research at this place is a very serious scientific achievement in terms of the localization of the Girdiman province in Shirvan. This means exposing the attempts of the so-called Armenian historians to falsify the history of Albania over the years with very strong scientific evidence. In short, the identification of the site of the Mehravan city founded by Mehran, the founder of the Mehranid dynasty, at the beginning of the 6th century, and the conduct of fundamental research on this site can be seen as a new page in the in-depth and comprehensive study of the history of Albania.



Pic. 9. Bone items dating to the early Middle Ages (Mehravan)



Pic. 10. Gold jewelry, agate seal, copper and silver coins dating to the early Middle Ages (Mehravan)

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Kirichenko Dmitry

*Leading Research Fellow at the Center for Anthropology of
the Institute of Archaeology, Ethnography and Anthropology of ANAS,
PhD in History, Associate Professor*

ABOUT THE SKULL FROM THE TIMBER GRAVE-CATACOMB OF MINGACHEVIR

Prior to describing the craniological material, we should examine the archaeological characteristics of the Mingachevir timber grave-catacombs.

Timber grave-catacombs (Fig. 2–3) were a new type of funerary monuments of the Caucasian Albania of antiquity, in which the memorial traditions of the indigenous Albanians and non-indigenous Sarmatian-Alanian population were combined and represented a multicultural symbiosis of that long bygone era.

The local Albanian burial traditions include the structure of juniper logs fixed with pegs to the corners of a wooden coffin (wooden vault), while catacombs should be attributed to the funeral customs of “newcomers”.

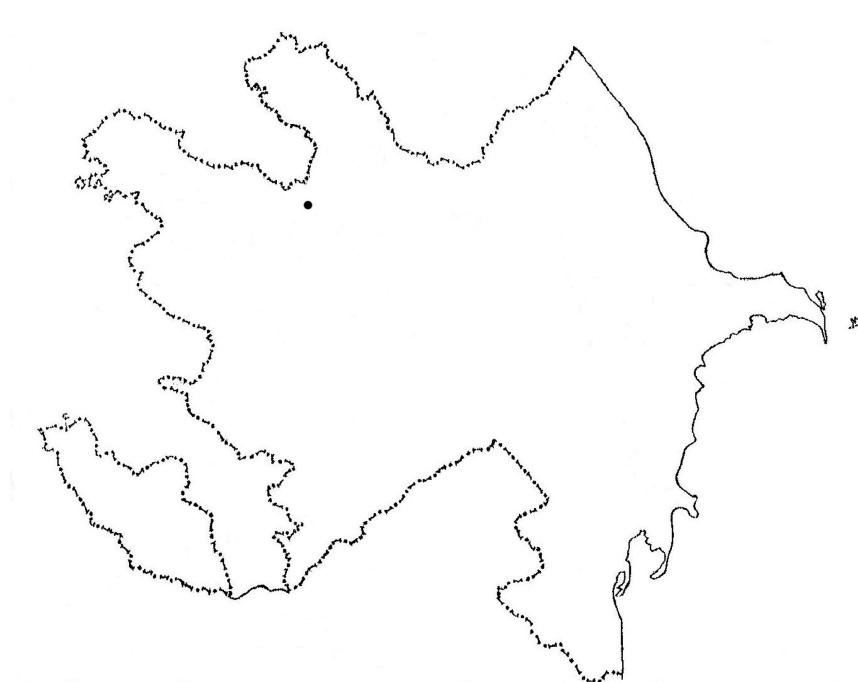
Archaeologists associate the catacomb burial rite in the Mingachevir area with the arrival of a new ethnic element, the Sarmatian-Alanian tribes [Гошгарлы, 2012, с.117].

In timber grave-catacombs, the deceased was put in a timber framework made in the catacomb chamber. Skeletons in these graves lie in a crouched position on the side, accompanied by clay and glass vessels, various beads, iron weapons, gold earrings, silver bowls and Arsacid coins [Тревер, 1959, с.170].

According to a number of researchers, timber graves of Azerbaijan were used to bury representatives of socially significant groups of the Albanian society [Гошгарлы, 2012, с.75]. Archaeologists date the timber grave-catacombs of Mingachevir to the 1st/2nd-3rd centuries AD [Гошгарлы, 2012, с.69].

Probably, it was warriors who were buried in those timber-catacombs, as various weapons found in the graves may indicate.

In addition to timber grave-catacombs, catacomb-jar burials were also found in the Mingachevir area, which also suggests the interaction of autochthonous Albanians with the non-indigenous Sarmatian-Alanian tribes, combining the local traditions of burying in jars and the traditions of the “newcomers”.



*Fig. 1. Location of the timber
grave-catacomb (Mingachevir)*

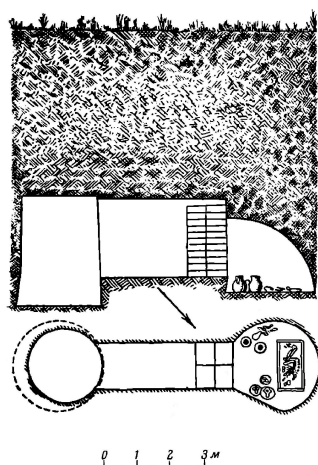


Fig. 2. Timber grave-catacomb
[Aslanov, 1955, fig. 25.1, p.65]

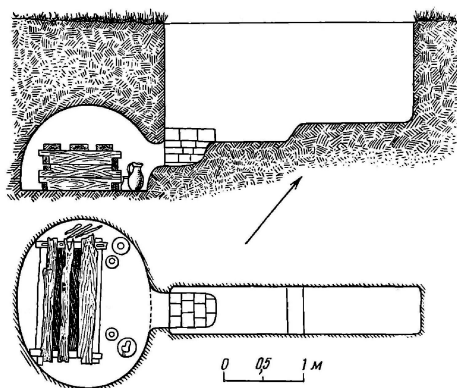


Fig. 3. Timber grave-catacomb
[Aslanov, 1955, fig. 25.3, p.65]

The grave goods found in timber grave-catacombs are similar to the materials from the jar burials of Mingachevir. Timber grave-catacombs differ from catacomb-jar burials in the small number of items buried with the deceased [Aslanov, 1962, s.66].

However, let's get back to our main subject of study. Probably, the investigated skull (Fig. 4) comes from catacomb no. 97, from the excavations of archaeologist G.M.Aslanov. Catacomb No. 97 was found in the 3rd Mingachevir settlement.

The 3rd settlement was located on the left bank of the Kura River, at the inflow of the river into the Boz-dag gorge, in the Kala-get area [Вайдов, 1952, с.88]. A burial field was also investigated here, located 400–500 m to the east of the settlement and containing mainly catacombs, timber graves and timber grave-catacombs [Вайдов, 1952, с.95].

Catacomb No. 97 was discovered at the excavation site no. 22, at a depth of 2.75 m [Aslanov, 1962, s.61].

The skeleton in the wooden vault was in a crouched position on the left side, with the head facing south. There were five red ceramic vessels around the vault. Bones of small cattle and poultry were found near the head and legs of the deceased. There was an iron sword opposite the skeleton, and a knife and dagger were found near the skull. An iron ring with two paste-stones was found near the fingers, a bronze bracelet on the right wrist, and a small ceramic vessel and fragments of a glass goblet near the elbow. In addition to the above items, an iron dagger, glittering glass, various beads, iron belt clips and pendants, an iron pin, a bronze rim, an iron horn-shaped item, two iron arrowheads, another iron dagger, bone knife scales and an iron knife, as well as a silver drachma of the Parthian king Gotarzes II (40/41–51 AD) were also found in the grave. [Aslanov, 1962, s.61].

Judging by the grave goods, the grave was supposedly that of a man of the military class and rather wealthy by the standards of that time. The craniological material was studied using the method of R.Martin, generally accepted in paleoanthropology (in an abbreviated program) [Martin, Saler, 1957; Алексеев, Дебец, 1964]. Pathological observations were made using the technique developed by A.P.Buzhilova [Бужилова, 1995; 1998], and other teaching aids, recommendations and reference books were also used [Aufderheide, Conrado, 1988; Ortner et al., 1981; Ubelaker, 1978; Waldron, 2009].

The investigated skull (which was of an elderly man) is mesocranial (Table 1), pentagonoid, characterized by the average value of skull length, small skull width, and average basibregmatic height. The minimum frontal breadth is average. The face is orthognathic, medium wide, very low, euryon according to the Cephalic Index. The face is well profiled at the top and bottom. The orbits are wide, medium high and mesoconchial. The nose is narrow, high and leptorrhine and protrudes significantly above the profile line. In the lower jaw of the individual, intravital loss of all teeth was noted.

The individual is of the Caucasoid anthropological type, presumably, of its southern branch (Mediterranean race).

As for pathologies on the skull, there is a metopic suture (sutura metopica).

A comparative analysis with craniological series and antique skulls from Azerbaijan shows that the male skull from the timber grave-catacomb is similar to the male skulls from the jar burials and timber graves, to the undeformed male skulls from the catacombs of Mingachevir, as well as, in some features, to the skulls of Sarmatian-Alanians from the North Caucasus and the Lower Don region.

In our opinion, the man from the timber grave-catacomb was a representative of an Albanian tribe, although it is not unthinkable that he was of Sarmatian-Alanian origin.

The paleoanthropological studies of Azerbaijan population have shown that, despite the differences in the types of burial monuments in ancient Caucasian Albania, all of them for the most part demonstrate the predominance of the dolicho-mesocranial Caspian anthropological type [Кириченко, 2020, с.72].

The Caspian anthropological type has been widespread on the territory of our country since the Mesolithic era and is recorded in all historical periods up to the present.



Fig. 4. Male skull from the timber grave-catacomb

Table. 1. Individual craniometrical measurements of the skull

No. acc.to Martin	Timber grave- catacomb Mingachevir ♂
1	179
8	136
5	100
9	98
17	134
40	91
45	134
48	64
51	44
52	35
54	24
55	56
77	135
< Zm	126
75 (1)	-
8:1	76
40:5	91
48:45	47,8
51:52	79,5
54:55	42,9

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Valiyev Elnur

*Senior Associate of the Archaeological Service Department of
the Institute of Archaeology, Ethnography and Anthropology of ANAS,
PhD in History, Associate Professor*

TRACES OF ZOROASTRIANISM IN THE ARTIFACTS OF MATERIAL CULTURE (TOREUTICS, RHYTONS, GRIFFINS) OF THE THIRD TO FIFTH CENTURIES FOUND IN THE TERRITORY OF CAUCASIAN ALBANIA

As a tradition of global and human significance, Zoroastrianism has influenced many religions and cultures around the world. According to many researchers, Zoroastrianism originated in the early first millennium BC in north-eastern Iran, Central Asia and Iran, and is rooted in the religious and mythical beliefs of ancient Iranian tribes.

Inspired by the mythical images from the ancient Aryan tradition, Avestan figures Fravashi, Asha, Daena, Mithra, Verethragna, Hvarena Rashnu, Vayu, Gusho Urvan, Sraosha, Aredvi Sura Anahita and others have been portrayed in artifacts of material cultures (e.g., toreutics, rhytons, griffins, intaglios, seals). Studying the archeological materials found in the territory of Azerbaijan, especially toreutics, rhytons and griffins, is of particular importance for establishing the religious worldview in Azerbaijan in the early Middle Ages. Of course, these materials must be explored in conjunction with historical and literary sources, in addition to other ethnographic materials. In this regard, we will try to examine the samples of toreutics, griffins and seals found in the territory of Azerbaijan comparatively with the artifacts of material culture of the same period from neighboring countries. In Azerbaijan, samples of toreutics have been obtained in two ways: a) accidentally; and, b) as a result of archeological excavations conducted in recent years. Archeological materials are the most obvious example of written sources.

A jug found in Baku is particularly noteworthy. The gilded jug is not that big in size and is of the same type as Sassanid dishes in terms of decorative design. It is 19 cm in height and 10 cm in width (Fig. 1). Four rhombuses have been engraved on the jug using plant-like lines. Inside the rhombuses, there

are images of a rooster, a pheasant, an eagle eating meat and a Simurg bird (phoenix). In the upper space, between the rhombuses, there are six-pointed stars within a saucer-shaped circle, and in the lower part, there are small animal pictures. At the intersections of the lines, there are images of flowers. [Кошкарлы, 1985, с.72].

The images on the jug are of different birds. The images of birds have been created on the basis of Sassanid art motifs representing benevolence. The Simurg bird, depicted in the center of the jug, is portrayed in Iranian, Central Asian and Azerbaijani mythology as a zoomorphic symbol of benevolence and also as a giant magical bird that travels long distances within a moment. The place of abode of Simurg bird is, according to the Avesta, at the top of a tree grown in the middle of the sea, and, according to Shahnameh, in the summit of Mount Alborz. In Azerbaijani and Arabic folklore, Mount Alborz is known as Mount Qaf. Simurg bird, which is called "Zumrud bird" in Azerbaijani fairytales ("The tale of Simnar", "The tale of Malik Mammad", etc.), always helps the hero and repels dark forces in all stories where it is involved.

In the famous tale of "Malik Mammad", Malik Mammad triumphs over his treacherous brothers with the help of Simurg. In other words, the good prevails over the evil with the help of Simurg.

The struggle between the good (Ahura Mazda) and the evil (Ahriman), the two polar opposites of the Avestan philosophy, is an abstract concept. As an illustration, Avesta says (Yasna 30): "At the beginning, twain spirits, "the good" and "the bad" thought, deed and behavior emerged. Of these two spirits, benevolent, not the malevolent, people chose the truth (the good) [Авеста, 1998, с.130].



Fig. 1. A jug found in Baku, 3rd to 5th centuries [Кошкарлы, 1985, s.121]

The symbol of Sraosha is a rooster and it protects people from evil forces. In the Avesta, the word “sraosha” is used in the sense of “obedience”. It is called “Sraosh” in Middle Persian and “Surush” in the modern-day Persian. In Gathas, it is expressed as “obedience to religion”. In the Avesta, there is a dual attitude both towards animals and birds. That is, those created by Ahriman is described as bringing malice to people, while the ones created by Ahura Mazda are associated with good deeds [Авеста, 1998, c.119]. Good and evil are not an anthropological concept. They are a fully spiritual and psychological aspect that exists in human consciousness. Their positive and negative aspects manifest in the benevolent or malevolent thoughts, words and actions of a human being.

According to the Avesta, the abode of Ahura Mazda is on the holy mountain called Hara Berezaiti known by the name of “Albor” in the ancient Pahlavi language, and “Alborz” in the modern-day Persian, as well as in our language. According to a legend, this mountain, which is considered to be the mother of all mountains on Earth, touches the heaven. According to the Avesta, there is no night, darkness, cold or hot wind, or deadly diseases in this mountain. This mountain has several peaks. Among them, the peak called “Tahir” is considered to be the center of the world. The Sun, the Moon and the stars are

circling around this peak. The holy Vourukasha Sea, which according to many scientists is the modern-day Caspian Sea, is situated on the slopes of this mountain [Təhmasib, 1945, c.5].

The etymology of Simurg bird is particularly noteworthy. The translators of Shahnameh into English attempted to explain its complicated name with its real depiction. According to K.V.Trever, the etymology of the word “Simurgh” should be interpreted by the words “ayina(adenak)”, which means “image” or “dog”, and “merevo (merv)”, which means “bird”. Such an interpretation of the name, i.e., “saena mevo” or “sen-murv”, matches the physical appearance of Simurgh, as well. [Тревер, 1937, s.25]. This is related to the existence of dualism in the Avesta. It alludes to the animals created by Ahura Mazda and Angra Manyu (Ahriman, the god of evil). Benevolent animals also fight evil forces. For example, by crowing early in the morning, Sraosha, Paridar (rooster) scares away Ahriman, while the dog frightens Ahriman with its stare (“Videvdat” 8.16-19) [Авеста, 1998, c.112].

The 13th and other chapters of Videvdat are dedicated to the dog. These chapters deal with religious rites performed with the involvement of a dog and the rules for taking care of a dog. In the Avesta, the dog with its sanctity is treated almost equal to a human. The Avesta considers dogs as benevolent animals (“Videvdat” 13-16), but later

dog worshipping was not accepted [Авеста, 1998, с.112-119].

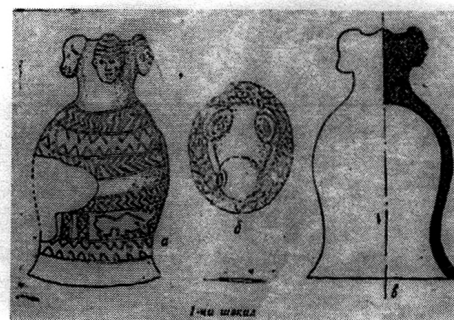
The rooster, which is called “Sraosha”, is considered to be one of the creatures of Ahura Mazda (the god of the good) and a benevolent force, which heralds the coming of the morning, i.e., the light’s victory over Ahriman. Perhaps, the folk saying “a household member may die if you do not cut the head of the rooster that crows untimely” is related to the Avesta. According to Zoroastrian tradition, when Hushang, the son of the first human being and ruler of the world Keyumars, killed monsters, he regarded the rooster’s crow as the beginning of success and took the rooster to his residence, and the rooster would crow at the dawn to announce the coming of the morning. Once Keyumars fell ill (sickness and death is caused by Ahriman). In one of the evenings when Keyumars was ill, the rooster crowed. People were surprised by the untimely crow of the rooster, because “evening” was also called “the time of the evil”. They rushed to Keyumars’ place and found him dead. Thus, the rooster’s evening crow led to the emergence of this saying [Abdulayev, 1989, s.9, 10].

The rooster is one of the favorite domestic animals of Zoroastrians. It was created to fight one of Ahriman’s forces, i.e., monsters. According to a religious belief, a rooster’s crow at the dawn is a manifestation of its fight against Ahriman. By crowing, the rooster wakes up sleeping humans. Thus, it does not allow Ahriman’s monster of sleep, which spreads laziness and sloth, to be victorious over humans. According to the beliefs of Zoroastrians, the rooster and the dog help the angel which protects the world from the evils of monsters at night. In the Middle Ages, a popular belief emerged that allegedly the evil cannot come close to a house where there is a rooster [Dadaşzadə, 1985, s.57]. We also find a rooster-related belief in one of Nizami’s epics: “When a black monster came, the rooster crowed and a roaring drum called to battle”.

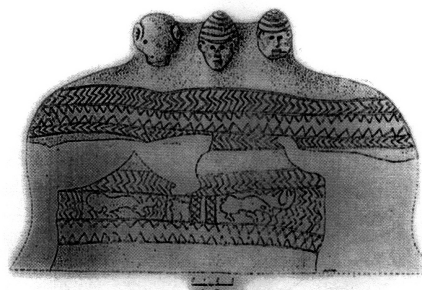
In the Videvdāt section of the Avesta (18), Sraosha is described as Ahura Mazda’s “drum-playing” harbinger and sacred bird (rooster). Yasna (57.2) says: “Sraosha performs such duties as protecting the faithful from bad thoughts and evil forces, and punishing monsters at night. To do so, he drives them off with a cudgel.” Rashnu is the god of truth and verity. In the Avesta, Mithra is the god of agreement and concord (“god of mercy” in the Middle Persian). Achaemenids worshipped Mithra as

the god of victory. Most likely, according to the legend spread in the later period of Hellenism, Sraosha and Rashnu, as companions of Mithra, stood with him on the Chinvat bridge and judged the souls of dead people. In the Middle Persian sources, Sraosha escorts the souls of dead people to the afterlife. According to the Avesta, this duty is performed by the prophet Zoroaster himself [Dadaşzadə, 1985, s.98-119].

We find rooster depictions in later Sassanid toreutics, as well. They have also been etched on intaglios and rocks. The image of a pheasant is common in the Sassanid art. It is mainly portrayed with a ribbon around its neck or on its beak. They can also be found on intaglios, seals and fabrics. The depiction of an eagle tearing apart an herbivore is more widespread in the Sassanid art. This image can also be found in earlier sources. Parthian seals found in Nisa can be shown as an example. According to K. Boomer, this theme passed to Parthians and later to Sassanids. The scene of an eagle tearing apart an herbivore is traditionally observed in



*A rhyton found in Shamakhi,
first millennium BC*



*Fig. 2. A cup found in Baku,
3rd – 5th centuries
[Кошкарлы, 1985, s.124]*

autumn or spring. In Sassanid toreutics, this scene can be seen on a bowl found in the Ufim treasure, a plate exhibited in the Perm Art Gallery and a jug in the Hermitage Museum. The jug in the Hermitage Museum is more similar to the one discovered in Baku [Кошкарлы, 1985, s.74-75].

An item made of soft limestone and discovered among the rich material culture artifacts found during the archeological excavations in ancient Shamakhi in 1964 also attracts attention. This artifact was found as fragments from one of the farming wells dating to the first millennium BC (Fig. 2) [Хәлилов, 1973, s.17].

In the upper part of the rhyton, heads of two humans and one dog are depicted in a convex form. The depictions of a human head are distinguishable in that one human has a long face and the other has a relatively rounder face. Besides, their heads have been decorated with an arakhchin (arakhchin or tubeteika was traditionally worn under other headdresses such as a cap or turban). The ears and noses of humans were shaped convexly, while their eyes and mouths were carved out. What engages our attention is the depiction of a dog head. The dog depiction has its ears cut and eyes carved out. The decorative design of this item raises no question about its religious purpose. This interesting object, which is conditionally called a rhyton, has another interesting aspect: when you hold it upside down it becomes a goblet. The two human heads and one dog head become three legs of the goblet. Of course, it would be difficult to use this item as a goblet at home, because a rhyton is an artifact with harmonious patterns made from a solid piece of rock. Probably, it was used as a drinking vessel at some religious rites.

According to O.V.Leshenko, goblets and saucers with animal images found in Iran and related territories were meant to be used for Haoma drink. A goblet with horse figurine found in Lankaran can be shown as an example. According to O.V.Leshenko, this goblet with horse figurine were used for Zoroastrian religious rites [Лешенко, 1996, с.241]. In the Avesta, the root of the word “haoma” is “ham”, which means “squeeze”. It is an intoxicating drink made of plants. The haoma cult and traditions of its performance dates to the Indo-Aryan period (before the advent of the Zoroastrian religion). Haoma corresponds to “Soma” (drinks with the same composition, which differ only in names) mentioned

in Vedas [Борисов, Луконин, 1963, s.113]. Prophet Zoroaster rejected the Haoma drink in Gathas, calling it a sign of evil (Avesta, Yasna 48.10) and prohibiting its consumption. Starting from the reign of Darius I (522–486 BC), the Haoma cult began to lose its significance. During the Sassanid period, this ceremony survived only on the edges of the empire in a weakened form.

The rhyton was made with great mastery and served as a goblet (for religious rites). As for the images on the rhyton, judging by the features of the heads, there is no doubt that one of them is male, and the other is female. The third convex-shaped head on the rhyton is that of a dog. Tribes residing in the territory of Azerbaijan since ancient times had a special attitude towards the dog. It is therefore no coincidence that dog-related rituals can sometimes be found even now. In some villages of Azerbaijan, people hang dog heads in the yards of their houses, believing that it protects the household members from the evil eye. In general, the dog is regarded as the symbol of loyalty.

Both written sources and archeological materials have mentioned that Azerbaijan’s ancient inhabitants – Albanians – treated dogs with special care. Namely, dogs played a special role both in farm and in military. In addition, in his book called “Geography”, Strabo noted that Albanian dogs were also of great importance in hunting. During archeological excavations in Azerbaijan, dog bones were found alongside human bones in burial monuments dating to the Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age. The findings of the ancient Shamakhi are particularly important in establishing the date of the rhyton. The archeological explorations of this site have shown that in several tombs dating to the last quarter of the first millennium BC and early centuries of our era, the human was accompanied to the afterlife by a dog. In addition, dog skeletons were frequently found in graves, which suggests that dogs were buried according to special rites. [Борисов, Луконин, 1963, s.114]. Julius Solinus, who lived in the 3rd century, wrote that Albanians set dogs on wild animals and those dogs killed wild oxen and lions. Julius Solinus also noted that the Albanian king presented a pair of such dogs to Alexander the Great [Хәлилов, 1973, s.16]. In addition to the information provided by all of the abovementioned sources, archeological findings also prove the special

importance given to dogs by Albanians. The two convex-shaped human heads and one dog head on this masterfully made rhyton is a clear example.

One of the images on the jug found in Baku is, as previously mentioned, an eagle. Another noteworthy item in this regard is the bronze griffin accidentally found in Zogala village, Julfa district, Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic, in 1932 and transferred to Nakhchivan State Museum.

The monuments of material culture located in the territory of Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic are of particular scientific importance for studying the history of Azerbaijan in the second half of the first millennium BC and early centuries of our era. It is known that Nakhchivan city was one of the economically and culturally developed administrative and commercial centers of Azerbaijan in antiquity [Əliyev, Ağazadə, 1986, s.75].

Zogala village is situated on the left bank of the river Alinjachay, 40 kilometers east of Nakhchivan city. The village is surrounded by steep mountains on all sides. The trade route passing across this village traverses through the Alinjachay valley, Zanzagur mountains and Batabat pass and extends all the way to upland Karabakh. This route connects Nakhchivan to the ancient trade centers of southern Azerbaijan.

I.P.Sheblykin has mentioned about these bronze griffins (Fig. 3) found in Zogala village in his article "Ancient column bases found in Orangala and Nakhchivan." After seeing the bronze griffins in Nakhchivan Ethnography Museum, I.P.Sheblykin conducted an exploratory excavation in the monument, where they had been found, but did not find any archeological material except for column pedestals. He associated the column pedestals with temple construction and gave little information about the griffins. One of these griffins is currently held in the Museum of Azerbaijan Literature named after Nizami, and the other one is held in the Hermitage Museum [Əliyev, Ağazadə, 1986, s.75].

Thus, its craftsman created an interesting and deeply symbolic artwork by combining eagle, horse, mule, jackal, human and lion depictions in the griffin. This griffin can be considered the most beautiful artwork in terms of fine arts and features of excellent craftsmanship.

It should be noted that the griff held in the Hermitage Museum differs from the abovementioned griffin only in lacking a base.

Griffins and griffs are depicted in the mythology of the ancient oriental peoples mainly as creatures with the body of a lion, the wings of an eagle and the head of a lion or an eagle and they have a symbolic character.

Griffs are in the shape of an eagle-like dragon etched in artifacts of material culture, while griffins are individual figures with the body of a lion or a tiger and the head of an eagle or a lion. In this sense, the figures found in Nakhchivan are griffins. S.I.Rudenko calls such griffins as "eagle griffins" (griffins with the body of a lion or a tiger and the head of an eagle). It should be noted that griffin depictions are widespread in the Ancient East and in artworks of antiquity. Scientific explorations have revealed griffins in other archeological sites of Azerbaijan, in addition to Nakhchivan. The bronze seal dating to the 4th century BC found in Mingachevir is considered to be a monument of Achaemenid culture due to its manufacturing technique and craftsmanship features. The seal bears an image of a winged griff, an epic-mythological character belonging to Achaemenid art. Furthermore, we are familiar with bronze griffin-shaped belts found in the Mingachevir monument. An image of griffin was also encountered on the silver vase found in the dug soil [Kacyмова, 1993, c.48].

Similarly, a large graveyard site of jar burials was discovered in the old Shargah cemetery located one kilometer west of Hajigadirli village on the southern foothills of Langibaz mountains in Shamakhi district. Here, eight jar burials were opened and a number of archeological materials (domestic items made of clay, glass, etc. and decorative items made of metal, glass and various stones) were unearthed. Among the artifacts of material culture found here, a bronze eagle statuette stands out for its originality. The eagle figure measures 4.9 cm across the chest, the wings together measure 4.8 cm, its length from beak to tail is 6 cm, the height of the figure base is 2 cm, and the length of the base together with the pitchfork-prong-shaped part is 4.3 cm. In general, when making the statuette, the craftsman ensured proportionality between the parts of the figure and managed to create a work of art with precise symmetry.

In Azerbaijan, artifacts of material culture with images of birds can be found on monuments belonging to a period from the Bronze Age to the late Middle Ages [Nuriyev, 1972, s.74].



Fig. 3. A bronze griffin found in Zogala village in Nakhchivan, 3rd to 7th centuries

When studying archaeological data, examples of eagle depictions can also be found on monuments of antiquity. For example, in ancient mythology and monuments of antiquity, Zeus takes revenge on Prometheus with the power of an eagle. Hence, it is no coincidence that Zeus is depicted with an eagle. It should however be noted that it is difficult to make a definitive statement about this, because it is a rare occasion [Тревер, 1959, с.317; Луконин, 1969, с.237; Бонгард, 1983, с.34].

In archaic (ancient) myths, the stealing of fire is associated with birds, or rather, in many cases with eagles. However, here we are faced with a strange fact. Although fire and water are polar opposite elements, we find eagles to be associated with both functions. In Vedic hymns, the eagle brings Soma (Haoma) drink for Indra from heavens (RV IV 27, 1). This seems to explain the association of the eagle with water. Eagles are also primarily known as the savior of children in mythologies. A plate belonging to the Sassanid empire (6th century) held in the Hermitage depicts an eagle with two children next to it. One of the boys is portrayed as the symbol of Mithra, and the other as the symbol of Kochi [Мифы народов мира, 1992, с.2].

During an archeological exploration conducted in Shamakhi (Khinisli) under the guidance of J.A.Khalilov in 1963, a similar eagle statuette was found in the earthen grave #32. The author dated the discovered type of earthen grave to the 4th century.

As in the Near and Middle East, monuments with eagle depictions became symbolic in Azerbaijan since the emergence of the Sassanid empire.

It is beyond doubt that the rock with an inscription found in the altar of the Second Temple after the completion of excavations and explorations at the site of temples in Mingachevir in 1952 is a huge wooden cross pedestal (column base). However, the 62-character Albanian inscription on the cornice of this valuable monument and two peacocks standing face to face on its façade and the convex image of the “tree of life” between them attract the attention of all art historians and linguists focusing on the early Middle Ages (Fig. 4).

We do not know the height of the pedestal, which used to incorporate the rock with the Albanian inscription found in the temple, and the wooden cross that used to stand on it. However, judging by the size of the other stones scattered around the inscribed rock, it can be said that the pedestal used to be approximately 1.2-1.3 m high. The composition of birds or animals facing each other has been widespread in Middle Eastern and Eastern countries since the early Middle Ages.

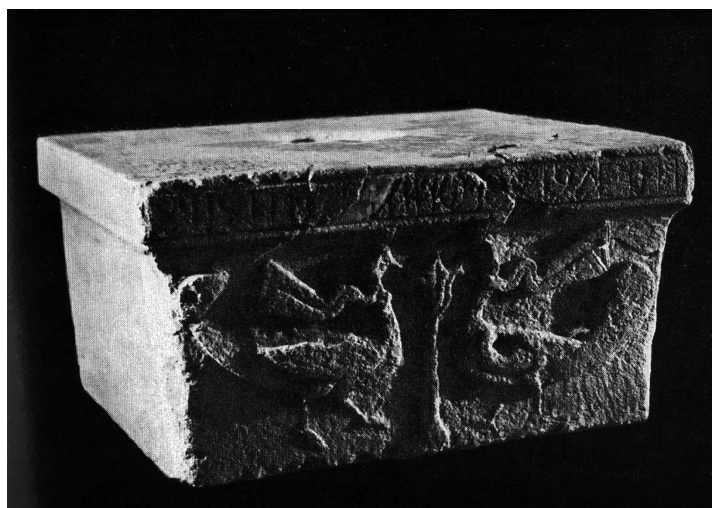
Later, this composition was used in the Christian and even Islamic monuments of the Middle East. Depictions of this composition are encountered in a convex form on different silver and bronze items and stone monuments, and in the form of a pattern on majolica and woven fabrics. This composition was a form of art in the Ancient East and was depicted with slight differences in different countries and periods. For example, in the Sassanid state, where this composition was most common, the birds facing each-other would have ribbons around their necks, which would get wider towards the tip, and between them there would be “the tree of life” or an altar. Images on Christian monuments differ in several

ways. Firstly, these monuments do not have ribbons on the birds' necks. Secondly, instead of "the tree of life" they have a cross between the birds. In some monuments, the composition consists only of birds standing face to face. In the territory of Azerbaijan, such depictions are known from the cross base in the abovementioned Second Temple of Mingachevir and from a tombstone found in Yukhari Findigan village of Sumgayit city. On the right side of the tombstone, there is an inscription indicating the name of the deceased and the date of the death as 789 AH (1384 AD). To the left of the inscription is a very rough image of two birds facing each other. The elongated body and open tails of the birds suggest that the artist wanted to draw peacocks. The discovery of a tombstone with bird images shows that this composition also spread to Islamic monuments. The composition found in Mingachevir is especially

interesting for its complex and delicate design and its older age.

In an article devoted to the study of this valuable monument, G.N.Chubinashvili gives a detailed analysis of mainly two issues: the context of the image depicted on the monument, and the period to which the monument belongs. To address the first issue, the author comprehensively analyzed the general composition of the image, the peacocks, the ribbons around their necks and "the tree of life" between them one by one and provided an extensive list of available literature covering this subject.

The conclusion from linking the medieval artifacts of material and spiritual culture existing in Azerbaijan to Zoroastrianism is that Zoroastrian culture has been an important part of the history and culture of Azerbaijan.



*Fig. 4. A stone column found at the site of temples in Mingachevir, 5th to 6th centuries
[Искусство Азербайджана, 1976, с.33, 40]*

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HISTORY,
ETHNOLOGY,
SOURCE STUDIES

Asadov Farda

*Head of the Department of History and Economy of Arab countries
of the Institute of Oriental Studies named after Z.M. Bunyadov of ANAS,
PhD in History, Associate Professor*

ARABS, ISLAM AND ALBANIA: INTERACTION AND TRANSFORMATION OF THE CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT IN THE SEVENTH–TENTH CENTURIES

Since the official adoption of Christianity by the Albanian king Urnayr in the 4th century, a significant part of the political elite of Caucasian Albania professed Christianity, but various pagan beliefs, Mazdaism and Zoroastrianism were also widespread [Мамедова, 1986, с.186-187]. After the battle of Nahavand in 642, which was a crushing defeat for Sasanian Iran, the victorious army of Arab Muslims got the opportunity to advance further north to continue their campaigns of conquest in the territory of modern Azerbaijan. What was the socio-cultural environment, foundations and forms of survival of society in Caucasian Albania? What new cultural values did the Arab Muslims offer to the population of the conquered countries and regions, and were there any opportunities for the diversity of the religious and ethnocultural situation in the country after the final consolidation of the territory of Azerbaijan within the new borders of the Muslim world?

Nomads and farmers in Caucasian Albania.

The conflict between nomads and sedentary farmers was one of the most important factors that shaped the historical conditions for the existence and development of medieval communities. This conflict had the most diverse manifestations and dimensions. The military-political and economic aspects of the interaction of nomads and sedentary farmers, of course, were of fundamental importance. They defined the nature of relations as antagonistic, since the economy of the nomads of the Eurasian steppes was built on the basis of distant pasture or extensive cattle breeding. In both cases, a potential conflict was created between the agricultural and nomadic pastoral communities [Гомбожапов, 2010, с.31-32]. In the case of distant pasture cattle breeding, the nomads partly had the need to use territories suitable for agriculture, and in the case of extensive cattle breeding, the life of nomads was associated with the variability of natural and climatic conditions. Under unfavorable conditions, the nomads had to rely on the

theft of the product from the agricultural population in order to survive, i.e. plundering inroads became a vital necessity for them [Крадин, 2000, с.324-325]. At the same time, there was also a powerful external economic factor in international trade, which built relations between nomads and sedentary farmers. Control over trade routes in order to guarantee the movement of goods through vast territories inhabited by various peoples and tribes served as an incentive for the creation of large nomadic empires to subordinate and also integrate with sedentary agricultural communities [Крадин, 2000, с.329]. Nomad empires were an important condition for the functioning of trade routes, since they guaranteed the safety of goods and the safety of merchants who went to trade for many months across the steppe expanses inhabited by warlike nomads.

The great empires of the Ancient World and the Middle Ages sought to establish political control over important sections of international trade routes, without, however, laying claim to the Caucasian and Volga steppes, which remained the world of Eurasian nomads. The construction of fortifications on the border with this world was both a military necessity and served as a cultural border of the two worlds. On both sides of these fortifications, the existence of two cultural spaces hostile to each other was asserted.

In comparison with other regions of the South Caucasus, Albania was a zone of more intensive contacts of the sedentary population with the nomads of the north. Trade routes of antiquity and the Middle Ages stretched from the territories of Eurasian nomads in the north, from the Greater Caucasus Range along the western coast of the Caspian Sea to the trading centers of the Middle East in the south. Strabo left us reliable evidence of the early existence of this trade route. He reports that the nomadic people Aorsi conducted caravan trade with the Middle East and India in partnership with the Medes and Armenian merchants, most likely no

later than the 2nd century. The Aorsi controlled most (apparently, the northwestern and northern parts) of the Caspian Sea coast and received large profits from this trade [Страбон, 1964, с.480]. In the course of the development of these trade routes, there was also a gradual penetration of groups of nomads into the territory along the trade routes.

The settling of nomads in Albania was also facilitated by the resettlement policy of Sassanid Iran, which pursued the goal of protecting the extreme northern borders of their state, which had advanced to the Caucasus Mountains as a result of the conquest campaigns of the Sassanid kings from the time of Yazdegerd II until the fortification of these boundaries of the Sassanid state by Khosrow Anoushiravan. As a result, forms of economic and cultural coexistence with nomads were established. This can be judged based on Strabo's evidence: "Albanians are more faithful to cattle breeding and are closer to nomads; however, they are not wild and therefore not very warlike" [Страбон, 1964, с.475].

Armenian sources left enough evidence that the lands to the north of the Kura by the time the Arabs appeared here were a country of nomad Khons [Sebeos, 1999, p.32]. The same is confirmed by the Arab authors who have preserved for us the testimonies of previous Sasanian sources. Arab historian al-Balazuri reports that before the accession of Khosrow Anoushiravan (530–578), Arran (Caucasian Albania) and Jurzan (Georgia) were subject to the Khazars, and Armenia – to Byzantium. Moreover, the Khazars periodically raided further south and reached the Sasanian fortress Dinavar, the ruins of which are located north of the modern city of Kermanshah in Western Iran. Gabala, the capital of ancient Caucasian Albania, was the administrative center of the Khazars [Imamo Ahmed ibn Yahja ibn Djabir al-Beladsori, 1866, p.194-195].

It was the Khazars who were able to contain the victorious Arab conquerors with worthy resistance in their aspirations to advance to the borders of the former Sassanid state. The Khazar state was the successor of the Western Turkic Kaganate, which ceased to exist as a result of the dynastic civil strife of 640–657. In other words, the Khazar Kaganate was practically the same age as the Arab Caliphate.

Attitude of Muslim Arabs to Nomads. The Muslim state did not start with a clean slate, but followed the proven path of its predecessors. Having occupied the region of Sasanian Iran, the Arabs first

had to define their models of interaction with the local population and political forces in the region. With Byzantium, the clash of political and ideological interests led to constant confrontation. The war with the Turks of Central Asia was stubborn, and the Arabs for the first time switched from offensive to defense on the border with them [Бартольд, 1963, с.244]. What changed after the collapse of the Sassanids and the arrival of the Arabs in the South Caucasus? Were the Arab-Muslim conquerors able to reproduce the *modus vivendi* that had developed with the world of nomads at the time of the advance of the Arabs to the Sassanid border in the Caucasus?

The new empire looked for its approaches in international trade, politics and strategy of relations with rebellious and warlike nomads. Until about the end of the 8th century, the line of confrontation with the Turks in Central Asia and the Caucasus continued, and the Arabs repaired the dilapidated barrier walls [Асадов, 2012, с.163]. In the subsequent era, common interests developed and trade routes were resumed. The Arabs, perhaps more than the Persians, were prepared for cultural interaction on the borders with the Turkic world, despite the first hostile perceptions that arose from fierce military clashes. The hadiths, pious stories about the life and work of the Prophet Muhammad and his companions, reflected the first impressions of the warlike Turks, which, as in the legends of other sedentary peoples, presented nomads as enemies of the civilized world. "Do not touch the Turks until they touch you" was narrated in a hadith as a piece of advice by the Prophet Muhammad. "The Turks will be the first who will be able to take away their possession from my people," the Prophet predicted [ал-Хамадани, л.168а]. But it was initial impressions. Over time, it was possible to create conditions for peaceful coexistence. And, as we know, almost all Turkic peoples have become part of the Muslim world. Using L. Gumilyov's term, the necessary level of positive complementarity was prepared by the previous history of Arabs and Islam. The state of historical conflict between the sedentary and nomadic population in the Arab-Muslim system of moral and ethical values should be recognized as decisive for the attitude of Arabs towards foreign nomads. First of all, let us pay attention to the fact that before the emergence of Islam, Arab tribes distinguished each other by tribal names and genealogies. There was a certain linguistic community, but there was no ethno-political unity

and its defining name. At the same time, the Arabian society was divided into culturally and economically opposing townspeople - merchants and artisans - and Bedouin nomads. Islam was the religion more of the sedentary "inhabitants of the villages", to whom the Quranic verses were addressed, than of the Bedouins. Nevertheless, the community proclaimed by the new religion united both of them, and by self-designation it adopted the word Arab, which meant "steppe dweller", "hermit", "nomad" [Грязневич, 1982, с.75, 95-96].

This unity was made possible by the fact that the nomads and townspeople of the Arabian Peninsula since ancient times constituted an environment in which each of the two groups of the population had a role to play in ensuring the world trade in incense. This commonality of interests was politically and ideologically realized with the emergence of Islam, which put forward religious unity as a supra-tribal association, in which all tribal genealogies were included in the system of descent from the same ancestors – tribal eponyms. The general designation of Arab people is practically not found in the pre-Quranic written and oral tradition. Sometimes they point to the existing rivalry between the Arab tribes and the antagonism between the townspeople and the Bedouins. However, this rivalry and confrontation should be viewed as a system of values, in which there was both knowledge about the characteristics of each other and mutual recognition. Over the centuries, representatives of this ethnocultural environment, who now shifted to sedentary life, highly esteemed the noble image of a nomad [Грюнебаум, 1981, с.13, 18].

Thus, for the Arab townspeople, the nomadic world was not a hostile environment, but rather a system of cultural and ethical values that were valuable enough for their perception and, moreover, consecrated by the history of Islam and the Prophet. Several centuries later, prominent Arab sociologist Ibn Khaldun (14th century) theoretically conceptualized and formulated the unity of the sedentary and nomadic population in his famous work "Mukaddima": "...Bedouins are those who are limited in their [life] conditions only to the necessary things and have nothing beyond that; urban dwellers, on the other hand, are those who take care of less necessary things and luxury items in their lives. But there is no doubt that the essentials are required before luxury and precede it. For the necessary is the root, and luxury is the branch that has grown from it. Thus, Bedouin life is the basis for cities and urban life and precedes them,

because the first thing a person desires is necessary, and he thinks about luxury only when this [necessary] has already been achieved" [Бациева, 1982, с.327].

Islam and non-Arab peoples. Having overcome the tribal boundaries, united the Bedouins and the townspeople and shaped the cultural and linguistic community of the Arabian Peninsula into a political system, Islam was evolving as a national system of values, but was designed as a world religion. The language of the Holy Scripture, ritual, and religious literature was and remains to this day Arabic. The precedents of Islamic law stemmed from the experience and life of the Prophet Muhammad and his interaction with the population of the Arabian Peninsula, mainly representatives of the Arab tribes. The traditional forms of political argumentation, attitude to science, the technique of jurisprudence – all had their roots and came from the Arab experience. Moreover, in order to join the Muslim community, it was necessary to overcome the time and geographical boundaries to which the pre-Islamic historical experience of non-Arab peoples was tied. Arabization was a means of overcoming this. And for the neophytes themselves, Islamization and Arabization practically did not differ [Грюнебаум, 1978, с.38].

An important social institution that facilitated the entry of the local population into the system of socio-political relations and cultural values of Islam was the institution of clientele. The adoption of Islam could take place under the patronage of a noble Arab Muslim, as a result of which the convert became a client (mawla) of the tribe of his patron, that is, formally equated with the status of his Arab tribesmen.

Of course, in practice, the mawla did not enjoy all the privileges of their official Arab "kinsmen". Mawlas were not admitted to government service, and often continued to pay taxes levied on gentiles. This was the case in the first two centuries of Islam, in the decades of the rule of the Arab dynasty of the Umayyads. The Abbasid Revolution was not just a change of the ruling dynasty in the Caliphate (750), but a social movement supported by the non-Arab Muslim population. As a result, there was an equalization of the socio-economic rights of the Arab and non-Arab population of Muslim countries. The national traditions of the conquered peoples were incorporated into the Islamic system in the process of its Arabization and Islamization.

The universal significance of Islam was also manifested in the impact on other dogmatically formed world religions, first of all, Christianity. Christian

ecumenism – tendencies in the modern Christian world to overcome the dogmatic contradictions of various teachings, according to a number of researchers, began to form initially in the context and under the influence of Muslim universalism. Eastern Christian theologians, who worked in a single intellectual space and in contact with Muslim legislators and theologians, substantiated the ideological and dogmatic cohesiveness of the Christian doctrine and formed a holistic perception of their own religion among the followers of Christianity [Селезнев, 2012, с.84-85].

It can, of course, be noted that in Islam itself, after the stage of its dogmatic formation, internal doctrinal differences were revealed regarding the same views on the management of the state, the formation of its ruling elite, the theory of knowledge and divine knowledge. And these divisions also led to deep divisions and animosities between Muslim communities. But it is important to note that these differences were radically developed as ethno-confessional and social conflicts. Moreover, Islam has always had a universalist tradition as a powerful alternative to disunity. Here, we consider new trends that emerged in the region with the arrival of Islam, i.e. the object of consideration is the period of existence of the Caliphate community or the pre-crisis period of the Muslim world.

Arabism was an undoubted characteristic of the new religion, but it did not become an insurmountable obstacle to the introduction of other peoples to the value and cultural system of Islam, since it was not postulated as a principle, but was a natural and timely proposed instrument of universalism. The main thing was the creed, its ideological and semantic load and the emphasis on the absence of national and ethnic boundaries in Islam. This was confirmed by the clear ideological principles of the Koran and subsequent religious literature.

Arabs in Azerbaijan: Islamization of the population. Among some insufficiently informed authors, one can come across assertions about a tough ultimatum, allegedly issued by the Arabs to the inhabitants of the conquered regions. They were supposedly offered to either convert to Islam or fight, and in case of defeat, they were deprived of their property and freedom. In fact, the Koran and the foundations of Islamic dogma and law did not force the adoption of Islam, but encouraged it by economic and ideological methods. Peoples and rulers who found themselves on the path of Arab conquests

could choose whether to remain in their faith and traditions, but at the same time, take on certain economic obligations to pay tribute and poll tax, or accept Islam. There was also a third choice – to fight. Muslim law clearly regulated these various statuses of the conquered lands, and the practice of relations with the local population took shape accordingly. Two fundamental legal statuses applied to the conquered lands and the population: lands subordinated by force ('anwatan) and peacefully (sulhan). The latter was formalized through a peace treaty between the parties [Колесников, 1982, с.148].

The texts of such agreements with Azerbaijan, Mugan and some other regions of the Caucasus have survived. Translation of some agreements into Russian can be found in the book by Z.M.Bunyadov [Бунятов, 1965, с.80-81]. As a country subordinate to the Sassanids, Caucasian Albania sent its army to participate in battles against the Arabs. The ruler of Albania, Varaz-Grigor, put his second son, the fearless prince Javanshir, at the head of this army. He fought bravely and was honored by his overlord [Vəlixanlı, 1993, с.18]. However, it became obvious that the Sasanian state is inevitably heading towards its destruction. Javanshir quite wisely decided he'd rather not allow the military forces of the dying empire into the Albanian lands. He fought the Persians and rescued his father, who was held hostage by them, from captivity [Каланкатуаци, 1984, с.96-97]. Albanian rulers Varaz-Grigor and his son Javanshir skillfully coordinated their actions; they maneuvered between the Arabs in the south, the Byzantines in the west and the Khazars in the north. For some time, this preserved the independence of the state and relative stability [Бунятов, 1965, с.100-102]. However, it is interesting that Prince Javanshir built his strategic ties with the Khazars through a matrimonial agreement with the daughter of the "Hunnic" ruler (vassal of the Khazar Kagan) [Каланкатуаци, 1984, с.102-103]. This is quite consistent with the previous strategy of seeking partnerships with nomads to achieve political independence from major powers. The Albanian ruler remained loyal to the alliance with the Khazars, and, perhaps, this protected him from the expansion of the Arab Caliphate, in which internal turmoil began at that time [Новосельцев, 1990, с.175].

The penetration and settling of nomads, and of the Khazar Turks in the last years before the Arab conquest, in the territory of Azerbaijan continued increasingly. In the descriptions of the events of the

Arab-Khazar wars, separate stories are intertwined, from which it follows that among the population of many cities there were people who spoke Khazar well. Among the townspeople there were also Khazars who converted to Islam. Some of them assisted the Arabs. Thanks to the betrayal of the Khazar warrior, who allegedly wished to convert to Islam, the Arabs managed to take Derbent. However, al-Kufi reports that immediately after the departure of Marwan, the Khazars returned and "settled in the city of al-Bab, as before" [ал-Куфи, 1981, с.14-15]. Information from Arab sources about the conquest of Arran, or the central part of Albania, makes it possible to judge that there were no major clashes here. It could be assumed that for the Arab authors who covered events in all areas of large-scale conquests during this period, the actions of the Arab troops in Albania could seem secondary, and therefore remained unmentioned. However, there is no mention of big battles by Movses Kaghankatvatsi, the author of the "History of the Albanians", either. This could be explained by the fact that the 4,000-6,000-strong army of the conqueror of Azerbaijan, Salman ibn Rabi'a, was a great and irresistible force for the small Albanian principalities to engage in battle with [Большаков, 1993, с.174]. A similar situation was in Armenia, where the scattered efforts of the Armenian princes were insufficient to resist the small troops of the Arab commander Habib ibn Maslama. And information from Arab sources in this regard is laconic and contradictory. More detailed information is available in Armenian sources, which, however, contain much inaccurate and legendary data; their comparison with Arab testimonies also does not help to clarify the course of events [Большаков, 1993, 168, 170].

At the same time, there is a reason to believe that the resistance to the Arabs in Albania was organized by the concerted actions of the Khazars and Albanian rulers. Prince Javanshir, as you can see above, saw an alliance with the Khazars as an opportunity to preserve his power and the independence of his country. Alliance with nomads was the traditional policy of the Albanian rulers facing the threat of the great powers. The forces of Salman ibn Rabi'a were lured to the borders of the Khazar Kaganate, where the Khazars could operate with great knowledge of local conditions and where they approached with large forces. There, near the Khazar city of Balanjar, the Arabs suffered a severe defeat and Salman ibn Rabi'a was killed [Abu Muhammad Ahmad ibn Actham

Al-Kufi, 1991: p.343-345]. A similar course of events is also indicated by the results of the unsuccessful campaign of the Arabs: the Khazars again advanced to Derbent, and Albania retained its independence for a certain time [Большаков, 1993, с.175].

After the death of Salman ibn Rabi'a, Caliph Uthman appointed Khuzaifa ibn al-Yaman the ruler of Azerbaijan and Arran. Khuzaifa ibn al-Yaman was better known as an authoritative narrator of hadiths (stories about Prophet's life) and an associate of Muhammad. The Arabs' tactics in waging war with the main enemy changed. They tried to attract the local population to their side. Clauses were included in agreements with local cities and regions that exempted local residents from paying the poll tax on condition of serving in the Arab army. An infantry troop was created of the dhimmi, i.e. the population under the patronage (dhimma) of the Arabs, and it actively participated in the military operations of the Muslim army [Бунятов, 1965, с.83-84].

The Arabs, contrary to popular belief, did not directly force the people of the conquered regions to convert to Islam. Tax benefits and Arab patronage of crafts and trade contributed to the fairly rapid adoption of Islam in the cities of Azerbaijan. Landowners saw the adoption of Islam as a way of political guarantees to preserve ownership of their holdings. Even populations in Christianized rural areas turned to the new faith in a relatively short time. This could be attributed to two factors. Of course, Christianity, like any new faith, was accepted formally by the bulk of the population, and the rural population, apparently, did not have strong convictions. In addition, the Arabs, understanding the strategic importance of the South Caucasus as a foothold for the struggle against Byzantium, treated people of different confessions in Albania rather mildly [Бунятов, 1965, с.89-90]. Effective building activities were undertaken to spread Islam. Mosques were built, and educational work was organized in them. It is reported, for example, that in 733 or 734, Maslama b. Abd al-Malik built a mosque for the Muslim Khazars living in Derbent [Brook Kevin Alan, 2006: p.180]. At the beginning mosques were built only where the military settlements of the Arabs were located, but soon they began to be built everywhere. By the 10th century, mosques were built in almost all cities. The presence of a cathedral mosque (jum'a mosque) has become a distinctive feature of a city from a village [Vəlixanlı, 1993: 72]. At the same time, in the mountainous areas, the population retained its former

beliefs for a long time. More than four centuries after the Arab conquest, Arab traveler al-Garnati had the opportunity to see the mountaineers practicing their pagan cults [Vəlixanlı, 1993: 68-70].

The religious situation and the process of Islamization of the population of Caucasian Albania were greatly influenced by the struggle between the Albanian and Armenian churches. The Armenian church, claiming to be the oldest in the South Caucasus, sought organizational subordination of the Georgian and Albanian churches. This unity was formalized for some time after the decisions of the Council of Dvin of the South Caucasian Churches in 506 and 527, when the South Caucasian Churches agreed to condemn the IV Ecumenical Council of Chalcedon (451), whose decisions they saw as the recognition of Nestorian diaphysite positions. For some time, the Dvin decisions served dogmatic unity with Byzantium, and practically contributed to the universal unity of Christians. However, the return to the Chalcedonian agreements during the reign of Emperor Justin I (518–527) and the subsequent Byzantine expansion in the South Caucasus caused a divide between the interests of the Armenian Church and the Byzantine imperial policy in the Caucasus and, at the same time, contributed to the tendency of the Albanian Church to secede from the union with the Armenian Church. Albanian high priests, beginning with Catholicos Abas (551–695), became independent and received ordination from the council of their bishops. Dogmatic agreement with the Byzantine Church was important for the confrontation with the Armenian Church. And starting with the Catholicos Viro (595–630), the Albanian Church inclined towards Chalcedonianism. The arrival of the Arabs tipped the scales in this confrontation in favor of the Armenian Church. The Armenian Church received the support of the Caliph. And according to the denunciation of the Armenian Catholicos Elijah to the Caliph Abd al-Malik, the Albanian high priest Nerses Bakur (688/9–704/5) was arrested and tortured to death. Apparently, behind the actions of Nerses was also the political party of the Albanian nobility, striving to preserve the country's independence. The Albanian nobility, apparently, relied on Sprama, the wife of the Albanian prince Varaz-Trdat [Бунятов, 1965, с.49, 94-97].

These events undoubtedly influenced the attitude of the Arabs towards the Albanian Church. The pressure on Albanian Christians was politically motivated. Apparently, for this reason, the Arabs

carried out measures to spread Islam here much more decisively and at great expense. The successor of Prince Javanshir, Varaz-Trdat, may have seen a chance for the preservation of the state in a departure from the political line of Javanshir and in opposition to the party of his wife Spram. Soon, however, the prince and many representatives of the Albanian nobility were taken to Syria [Каланкатуаци, 1984, с.160]. These events can be considered milestones in the history of the spread of Islam on the territory of Azerbaijan. The Albanian Church, disloyal to the Arabs, was reassigned to the Armenian Church, and fate forced the Albanian Christians to Gregorianization, i.e. the subordination of the Armenian Church, or the conversion to Islam.

Nevertheless, a small community of descendants of Albanian Christians, Udins, and the Albanian Church survived until the establishment of Russian rule in the South Caucasus, formalized by the Russian-Iranian Turkmenchay Treaty of 1828. The ethnic community of Udins still lives in the Gabala and Oguz regions of Azerbaijan. The fate of the Albanian Church was sad, it was formally abolished, and its organizational structures and congregational community, according to the Regulations of the Tsar's government in 1836, were subordinated to the Armenian Gregorian Church [Мамедова, 2005, с.556].

Formation of a multicultural worldview by early Muslim authors

The creation of a unified intellectual environment of the Arab and non-Arab peoples, in which a single Arabic language was used, opened the way for representatives of various peoples to common bookmansip practice. Intellectuals of Iranian, Turkic and Greek descent and representatives of many other nations got the opportunity to enrich themselves from the experience of others and bring the values and achievements of their own culture into Muslim intellectuality. And as a result, conceptualization and formulation of the multiculturalism of the Muslim world was taking place by intellectuals of different ethnic origins. A special merit in this process belongs to the famous Arab-Muslim prose writer Abu Usman Amr ibn Bahr al-Jahiz (776–868). He was called the founder of new Arabic prose and the father of Arab ethnography [Мец Адам, 1966, с.198].

The famous writer came from a very poor family. Early in his adult life, he was forced to trade in fish to support his family. According to legend, his grandfather

was African. Al-Jahiz is known as the author of several large encyclopedic works, but his authorial taste, apparently, gravitated towards compact and logically complete works devoted to a specific issue, often included in the title of the treatise. To get an idea of his work, it will be useful to cite some of the titles of these works: "The Book of the Arabs and the Mawali", "The Book of the Qahtanites and Adnanites", "A book about the contradictions between the clans of Hashim and Abd Shams", "A book about mines and a word about gems and various minerals", "A book on what blacks are proud of in front of whites" [Асадов, 1993, c.34-35].

Particularly noteworthy is his treatise "The Epistle to Fath b. Khakan about the merits of the Turks and the rest of the Caliph army" (al-Risala ila Fath b. Hakan fi manaqib al-Turk wa 'ammat jund al-khilafa). The treatise was written during the time of Caliph al-Mu'tasim (833-842) and, apparently, in response to his wishes, or even at his request. This caliph is famous for the fact that he began to actively attract the Turks to military service in the capital and the Caliph guard. This created conditions for rivalry and hostility on the part of the former military and bureaucratic elite. In his work, Al-Jahiz aims to describe the services of the Turks to the state and Islam and convince the reader that the Turks, the Arabs and other peoples are equally important for the Muslim world and the state. The objectives of the treatise gave him the opportunity, in general, to reflect on the differences between peoples and their contributions to the culture of not only the Muslim world, but of all mankind.

The work of Abu al-'Ala Muhammad b. Ali b. al-Hassul (d. 450/1058) "A book about the advantages of the Turks over other warriors" is thematically and spiritually related to the work of al-Jahiz. By origin, the author of the treatise was from Hamadan and, apparently, a Persian. He served under Sultan Mahmud Ghaznavid as head of the correspondence, witnessed the Seljuk conquest and, as can be assumed from his work, was involved in state affairs by Toghrul-bek and his wazir Amid al-Mulk al-Kunduri [Асадов, 1993, c.38]. The work of Ibn al-Hassul is distinguished by its attitude to the sources of legitimate political power in the Muslim state. The author considers the noble Turkic origin to be as great a merit and the basis for claims to political power as the noble Arab origin. At the same time, in his reasoning, Ibn al-Hassul is more committed to specific political goals of asserting the

preferential rights of the Seljukids to power than to comprehending the multicultural principle of forming a political system and social environment in the Muslim state. Comparing these two works, one can come to the conclusion that after the end of the golden age of the Caliphate, socio-political thought begins to lose the universalism and humanism of its logic and argumentation. It seems to indicate a tendency towards political disintegration of the Muslim world.

Among the population of the former Albania, these processes of initial universalization, undoubtedly, caused a positive reaction and a counter cultural movement, which contributed to the consolidation of cultural values, running alongside Islamization. We have no reports of the destruction of former temples and holy places during the spread of Islam in Albania. As in the process of adopting Christianity under the Albanian kings, spiritual and religious life and the observance of the prescriptions of the adopted religion were concentrated in cities – commercial and cultural centers. The population away from the cities continued to perform their religious activities and visit places of pilgrimage. The simple dogmatic structure of Islam, free from complex disputes like the clashes of Christological concepts in Eastern Christianity, easily absorbed local beliefs and rituals stemming from the beliefs and superstitions of the population. These beliefs and related rituals were implanted into a new religious environment. Therefore, the old religious sites and pilgrimage routes were preserved. These objects acquired a stable status in the local Muslim consciousness and became surrounded by legends from Muslim traditions that legitimized their sacredness for the Muslim faith. Thus, the routes to the pre-Islamic holy places were not forgotten. And in Azerbaijan, as in many other outskirts of the multi-ethnic and multicultural Muslim world, a doctrinal synthesis of objects and sources of people's religiosity took place; pre-Islamic holy places acquired new Islamic legends about their holiness. Conceptualization of this complex religiosity by God-seekers began. Centrifugal tendencies in the Arab Caliphate, which intensified in the 10th century, further contributed to local intellectual quest on the basis of local forms of Islam. This, probably, was the main reason for the development of Sufi sectarianism on the outskirts of the Muslim world, and here in Azerbaijan.

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Hegumen Alexy (Nikonorov)

Rector of the St. Nicholas Orthodox parish in Merano (Italy),

Candidate of Theology (Moscow Theological Academy),

Doctor of Church History (Pontificio Istituto Orientale / Pontifical Oriental Institute)

DIOCESES OF THE ALBANIAN CHURCH BY THE SIXTH CENTURY

The Universal Church consists of separate Local Churches one of which was the Church of Caucasian Albania. Local Churches, in turn, include cathedral churches, dioceses that combine parish churches and monasteries. This Church structure took shape as early as during the first centuries of its history, and since then it has remained fundamentally unchanged.

It is important to note that the administrative division of the Church is based on the territorial, not on the national principle [Цыпин, 2004, с.276]. Under normal conditions, Christians of any nationality living in the same territory constitute one parish and are guided by one bishop, for according to Apostle Paul, “there is no distinction between Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and freeman, but Christ is all” [Колосянам 3, 11]. These norms are also established by the decisions of the Aghvank Council [Каланкатуаци, 1984, кн.І, гл.26].

As said, however, in the 34th Apostolic Canon, “The bishops of every nation must acknowledge him who is first among them...”, but the historical context quite unequivocally says that “nation” in the canon means the territory inhabited by it. The provinces of the Roman Empire were inhabited by tribes that subsequently were hellenized or latinized. The names of the provinces preserved the memory of the peoples who once inhabited them: Dacia, Galatia, Thrace, Numidia. The attempts to put the ethnic or linguistic factor but not the territorial one as the principle of church organization, in particular, in determining the sphere of jurisdiction of the Local Church, which has been repeatedly undertaken in history, are canonically inappropriate and have always caused serious complications and confusion. Understanding these principles helps us in defining the canonical boundaries of the Albanian Church at different periods of its history, as well as in

defining the diocesan boundaries in relation to the administrative boundaries.

It is well known that in their territorial demarcation, the Local Churches conform to the political and administrative division, to the state and administrative boundaries. Apart from obvious conveniences, this principle is indirectly justified in the canons themselves. Thus, Canon 38 of the Council in Trullo holds: ‘If any city be renewed by imperial authority, or shall have been renewed, let the order of things ecclesiastical follow the civil and public models.’ Thus, following the canonical norms of the Church, the boundaries of the Albanian dioceses should coincide with the political and administrative division of Caucasian Albania itself.

According to the “Geography” written by Ananias of Shirak in the 7th century, the internal or left-bank Albania had six regions (gavars). Note that there are both different lists and different editions of the “Geography”, which contain a different number of left-bank Albanian regions, from six to eleven. A comparison of all the lists and editions of this geographical work leads to the conclusion that the left-bank Albania should be divided into six or even five regions. This conclusion is also confirmed by M.Kaghankatvatsi, who altogether names five ecclesiastical and administrative entities – the dioceses of the Albanian Church on the left bank of the Kura. Regions listed by A.Shirakatsi: 1. Yekhni, 2. Bekh, 3. Kambisena, 4. Shaki, 5. Vostan Imartspan, 6. Balasakan. In the two newest lists of the “Geography” the first two regions of Yekhni and Bekh are united into one – Yekhnibekh. The Albanian historian suggests the existence of one diocese and one bishop in this territory, whose jurisdiction should have also covered Kambisena [Hewsen, 2001, map.62, 64, p.73, 75]. In the name of the fifth region, some people prefer to read the two words separately, considering them to be names of

different regions, but, according to K.Patkanov, the continuous pronunciation in Persian of (v)ostan-i-marzpan is translated as “Marzpan Region”, i.e. in this case, it is logical to assume that we are talking about the Chola region as the residence of the Sassanian governors [Армянская география, 1877, с.41].

On the right bank of the Kura, the following provinces (from northwest to southeast) were located: Orkhistena (Artsakh), Otena (Utik) and Paytakaran.

In all likelihood, Orkhistena covered the territory of Karabakh (mountainous area), geographically including the eastern part of the Lesser Caucasus, the Karabakh Range, and the Karabakh Plateau. According to A.Shirakatsi, the province included 14 regions. R.Hewsen places the Mets Irank diocese in the northern part of this province (the contemporary Kalbajar region) and the Amaras and Gaband dioceses in the southeast (the contemporary Khojavend region). However, we must also place in this province the diocese of Metz Kuenk (Metz Kogmank), which occupied the territory of the present Agdam district with a probable center in the Vankasar monastery.

The Otena province occupied part of the Lesser Caucasus, the territory of the Plain Karabakh and stretched along the Kura on its right bank from the border with Iberia (Georgia) in the northwest to the Aras River in the southeast. According to Ananias of Shirak’s “Geography”, there were 8 regions in the province. The archdiocese of Partaw (and before it the diocese of Utik) and the diocese of Gardman (the contemporary Gadabay region) were located here. In the very north-west of the province, R.Hewsen locates the diocese of Khoshi (Gashua, Gosh) with its center in Shamkir that had a natural border with the diocese of Partaw on the Kurekchay River.

We find detailed information about the structural units of the Albanian Church in the synodic documents and official letters kept for us by the Albanian chronicler. In the VII chapter of the Second Book of “The History of the Albanians”, Movses Kaghankatvatsi cites the Epistle of the Armenian Catholicos Hovhannes II (557–574) to the Albanian Catholicos Ter-Abas (552–596). This Epistle is of interest to us due to the listing of the names of Albanian bishops, and, accordingly, of the episcopal sees in Albania at the time of this writing, i.e. by the middle of the 6th century. The text mentions eight

Albanian bishops: those of Partaw, Bakhalat, Qabala, Amaras, Balasakan, Shaki, Gardman, and Metz Kuenk.

Let’s note that the order of bishops in the list is most likely based not on the seniority of the sees (with the exception of the Archbishop of Partaw), but on the seniority of the bishops themselves, which is in line with experience and later epistolary church documents.

Based on the data from the sources, it can be asserted that the Albanian Church also included the dioceses of the autonomous regions of Lpinia and Chola, which were under the rule of the Archbishop of Partaw, the Catholicos of Albania [Каланкатуаци, 1984, кн.II, гл.15].

In addition to these ecclesiastical-administrative units, we should also mention the Hunnic diocese which was also under the jurisdiction of the head of the Albanian Church [Каланкатуаци, 1984, кн.II, гл.41, 45]. And the list is adjusted with information about the bishops who attended the Council of Aghvank in 488: Bishop of Gashua (Hosha, Yushi), Bishops of Yeuta, Bishop of Uty and Bishop of Tsri [Каланкатуаци, 1984, кн.I, гл.26].

The Albanian historian also points out that Catholicos Abas, prior to being elected as the Primate, had been the Bishop of Mets Irank [Каланкатуаци, 1984, кн.III, гл.24] and cites a document (a letter from the Armenian bishops written by Vartanes Kertol in response to the pastoral of Mkhitar, the Bishop of Amaras), mentioning the bishop in this see: “To you, who are listening and telling these days among the inhabitants of the Northern Territory, especially [among] all those who hesitate about the strength of the sacrament, to Hegemon Mkhitar – the Bishop of Amaras, Simeon – the Bishop of Metz Irank, and other bishops of the Holy Church - to your like-minded men, azats, and other [representatives] of the people of Aghvank” [Каланкатуаци, 1984, кн.II, гл.49].

So, the ecclesiastical-administrative division of the Albanian Church seems to be as follows:

- Archdiocese of Partaw,
- Diocese of Chola/Chora (the region of Maskuts)
- Diocese of Lpinia,
- Diocese of Qabala,
- Diocese of Bakhalat and Bekh/Yekhni-Bekh,
- Diocese of Shaki,
- Diocese of Paytakaran and Balasakan,
- Diocese of Amaras and Gaband

Diocese of Gardman,
 Diocese of Utik,
 Diocese of Mets Kuenk,
 Diocese of Mets Irank,
 Diocese of Gashua (Hosha, Yushi),
 Diocese of Tsri (Chilbka),
 Hunnic Diocese,
 Diocese of Yeut.

This list could be completed by the Syunik Metropolitanate which in the second half of the 6th century until the beginning of the rule of Armenian Catholicos Abraham I (607–615) was actually under the jurisdiction of the Albanian Church, receiving ordination and holy myrrh from the Albanian Primate: “[At that time] Armenia was divided between the Persians and the Greeks. Hegemon Movses sat on the throne of St. Gregory in Dwin and on the Greek side, not far from him and in contrast to him, a certain John was enthroned. And when the Patriarchal See split in two, the rulers of Syunik separated and did not obey any of them according to the will of their bishop, the virtuous Peter, who was living out his last days and who told his diocese to be ordained in Aghvank and take the blessed myrrh there until the throne of St. Gregory is reunited. That is why Vartanes was ordained bishop of Syunik by Zacharias, Bishop of Aghvank. Therewith, the people of Syunik received the Holy oil from Aghvank from year to year” [Каланкатуаци, 1984, кн.II, гл.48].

Now, let’s take a closer look at the information about the dioceses of the Albanian Church.

Archdiocese of Partaw

Partaw (Barda), originally Perozapat, is a city founded in the 5th century by Albanian king Vache II at the behest of the Sassanid shahanshah Peroz and named after the latter [Каланкатуаци, 1984, кн.I, гл.15]. The medieval city is located a few kilometers from the contemporary Barda. According to M.Kaghankatvatsi, since its foundation, Partaw became the capital of Caucasian Albania and the residence of the last Albanian kings Arsacids, then of the grand princes Mihranids, of Persian governors marzbans, and, from the 6th to the 9th centuries, of Albanian Catholicoi. The Albanian chronicler reports: in the second year [of the reign of] Khosrow, the king of kings, when the beginning of the Armenian

calendar was established, in that very year the Patriarchal See of Aghvank was moved from Chola to the capital Partaw [Каланкатуаци, 1984, кн.II, гл.4]. Researchers suggest to correct in “the second year of Khosrow” to the “twentieth”, since the first year of the Armenian calendar (551) was the twentieth year of the reign of Shahinshah Khosrow I Anushirvan (531–579).

The author of the Third Book of the “History of the Albanians” indicates that the Cathedral of the Albanian archbishops in Partaw was consecrated in honor of St. Gregory the Illuminator [Каланкатуаци, 1984, кн.III, гл.17]. The hallows of the holy martyr Manuk, who suffered in 712 under the ruler of Ganja and Shirvan Abdul-Aziz Bahli, rested in this temple.

Several councils of the Albanian Church were gathered in Partaw itself: The Council of May 704 was convened at the insistence of Armenian Catholicos Yeghia Archishetsi with the approval of Caliph Abd al-Malik for the trial of Albanian Catholicos Nerses Bakur. The council was attended by 4 Albanian bishops. The council elected a new Catholicos by the name of Simeon. The result of the council was the Treaty of Agreement between Albania, Armenia and the Caliphate [Каланкатуаци, 1984, кн.III, гл.7-10]; the Council of 768 convened by Albanian Catholicos David II (767-776). It is mentioned in Matendaran’s manuscript # 6409 [Бунятов, 1965, с.223-226].

The canonical territory of the Partaw diocese included the following historical regions of the right-bank province of Otena: Uti Arandznak, Aranrot (possibly Aghve, Tri and Rotparsean), which correspond to the contemporary Barda, Agdam, part of Tartar (possibly part of Aghjabadi and Beylagan) districts of Azerbaijan.

M.Kaghankatvatsi points out that there was a chorbishop in the archdiocese of Partaw in 680 [Каланкатуаци, 1984, кн.II, гл.32].

The author of the III book of the “History of the Albanians” in Chapter 24 gives a detailed list of the archbishops who held the see of Partaw from 552 to the end of the 10th century (988). In this list, 32 holy hierarchs are listed for this period.

On the territory of the Partaw diocese, there was once Gis monastery founded by the apostolic father Elisha, and this was the place where the famous settlement of Kaghankatuik was located, from which Albanian historian Movses Kaghankatvatsi came. The ruins of the Gyaurkala basilica (6th century)

are preserved on the territory of the former Partaw diocese.

Archdiocese of Chola/Chora (the region of Maskuts)

Chola/Chora is a town and a region of the same name in the northeast of Caucasian Albania, identified with Derbent and the region (kingdom) of the Maskuts. As historians note, Derbent has always been a significant and prominent city, a strategic stronghold of the Albanians and Sassanids in the Caucasus. M.Kaghankatvatsi writes that the preachers of the Gospel in Chola were St.Grigris of Albania and M.Mashtots [Каланкатуаци, 1984, кн.I, гл.14, 27]. Since the inclusion of the Albanian kingdom into the Sassanid empire and the establishment of the political center of the Albanian Marzpanate in Chola in 428–552, the residence of the head of the Albanian Church moved to this city. After the transfer of the capital and the place of the Patriarchal See to Partaw, a new title of the Catholicos of Albania, Lpinia and Chora was bestowed on the primate of the Albanian Church [Каланкатуаци, 1984, кн.II, гл.15], which makes it clear that the city and the region, which had formerly been the archdiocese of the Albanian Catholicos in terms of the church hierarchy, remained in its jurisdiction and under its archpastoral administration.

According to researchers, the cathedral of the Albanian primate in Chola (Derbent) could be either the temple of the Naryn-Gala fortress of the 5th century [Кудрявцев, 1980, с.48-51], turned into a water cistern, or a 6th century temple which currently houses the Derbent Friday Mosque [Ханбабаев, 2004, 227-246; Артамонов, 1946, с.143].

Diocese of Lpinia

The canonical power of the Albanian Church primate outside his own diocese which included Partaw (Barda) and its immediate surroundings, as well as the former capital of the Marzpanate Chola/Chora, also extended to Lpinia, a semi-independent

region that became part of Caucasian Albania [Каланкатуаци, 1984, кн.III, гл.15, 24].

The issue of historical localization of Lpinia has not been fully resolved. We, on the basis of an analysis of various sources and opinions of researchers, place Lpinia between inner Albania and the Caspian in the Shamakhi region. Sources indicate that Lpinia once was a kingdom [Каланкатуаци, 1984, кн.II, гл.2; Егише, 1971, гл.III], which determined its special political position. According to M.Kaghankatvatsi, M.Mashtots enlightened this region by preaching the Gospel [Каланкатуаци, 1984, кн.I, гл.27].

As follows from the context of the Albanian Chronicle, the Archbishop of Partaw, like Oriental Patriarchs, had the right of *stauropegion*¹, in fact retaining the right of canonical administration of various church regions (Partaw, Chola, Lpinia, Balasakan), which had a special status within the Albanian state.

Diocese of Gabala

Gabala (Qabala, Qabalaka) is the ancient capital of Caucasian Albania, first mentioned by Roman author Pliny the Elder [Pliny, 1947, кн.VI, §29]. In 510, the city for some time became the seat of Persian marzpan [Мамедова, 2005, с.253, 316]. In the early 4th century, i.e. since Christianization of Caucasian Albania, Qabala became the seat of the Albanian Church primate. After the transfer of the arch-see after the marzpan's residence to Chola in 462, Qabala became an ordinary diocese ruled by its bishop [Акопян, 1987, с.274].

The Diocese of Gabala extended its jurisdiction over the regions (according to the lengthy edition of the "Geography" by Ananias of Shirak): Qabalak, Hambasi, Gelava and Ejeri.

M.Kaghankatvatsi mentions several Qabalak bishops: Manasseh (487–488), Gregory (second half of the 6th century), and John (704). Also, the author of the Third Book of the "History of Albania" notes that the three primates of the Albanian Church – Archbishops of Partaw – were elected from among the Qabalak bishops: Matthew II (776–777), David IV (821–849), and David V (923–930).

¹ *Stauropegion* is a status assigned to church divisions, monasteries, lavras and brethrens, as well as cathedrals and theological schools, making them independent on the local diocesan authority and subordinate directly to the patriarch or synod.

Diocese of Bakhalat and Yekhni-Bekh

Moses, the bishop of Bakhalat, is mentioned only once in a letter from Catholicos Hovhannes in 568.

S.Yeremyan identifies Bakhalat with the village of Bakhtalo (Bakhmatli) in the Zagatala region of Azerbaijan [Еремян, 1958, с.324]. R.Hewsen seems to agree with this opinion, since on his maps of Caucasian Albania he places Bakhalat in the historical region of Yekhni-Bekh (the contemporary Zagatala, Balakan and Qakh districts, as well as the eastern part of Kakheti) [Hewsen, 2001, map.62, 64, p.73, 75] mentioned in the "Geography" of A.Shirakatsi among the six Albanian provinces located on the left bank of the Kura.

The Diocese of Bakhalat also covered Kambisena, located south of Yekhnibekh across the Alazani River, and thus occupied the territory between the Greater Caucasus in the north and the Kura in the south, the Gabala and Alazani rivers in the west and the Kurmukhchay river in the east. For fairness sake, we should note that attempts are made to locate Bakhalat in Artsakh, on the site of the village of Bat in the Yevlakh district [Геюшев, 1984, с.36-37] or near Chola (Derbent) [Акопян, 1987, с.131].

On the territory of the historical region of Yekhni-Bekh, the ruins of about two dozen temples and monuments have survived: Bukhovlu (7th–8th centuries), Pipan (7th–8th centuries), Kum (5th–6th centuries), Lekit (5th–6th centuries), Edti Kilse in the same Lekit (6th century), Mamrux temple on Mount Armatay (4th–5th centuries), Katekh (5th century, first mentioned in 1020), Khanifa, the Ayritala church (5th–9th–14th centuries), Mazymgaray (5th–6th centuries), Muxax (4th–5th centuries), Pashan (4th–5th centuries), Tyulyu (5th–7th centuries), Khalatala (5th–9th centuries), St.George church in Kurmukh (12th century), Arylygbina temple complex in Gullar (13th century), Matsekh (Mazykh), Gebizdere, Yukhary Tala and Yukhary Chardakhlar.

Diocese of Shaki

Shaki is a historical area of Caucasian Albania (Sakasena–Sake–Shakashen) and the fourth of the six provinces on the left bank of the Kura listed by

Ananias of Shirak. Historians sometimes identify or confuse Shaki on the left bank of the Kura with the region located south of Shaki beyond the Kura – Shakashen (Otena province) – inhabited, according to sources, by the Iranian-speaking Scythians who joined the union of Albanian tribes. The region covered the territory of the contemporary Shaki and Oghuz districts of Azerbaijan, being bounded in the west by the Kurmukhchay and Alazani rivers, in the east by the Turyanchay (Turyan) river; in the south the region reached the Kura.

The "History of the Albanians", following the "Book of Epistles", mentions at the See of Shaki: Bishop Avvakum (mid-6th century), Bishop Eliazar elected to the Patriarchal See (680–686), and Saint Michael (705–742) who before his consecration as the Albanian Catholicos had been the Deacon of Shaki.

On the territory of the Shaki diocese, there are still several monuments of Albanian temple architecture: the Church of St.Elishe in Kish (probably originally erected in honor of the Most Holy Theotokos) (1st–4th–10th–12th centuries), the temple of Jalut (5th–6th centuries), Yagysh Arakel church, Oghuz temple, Orta-Zeyzid church (10th century), Bideiz church (12th century), Emili church (4th–5th centuries).

Diocese of Paytakaran and Balasakan

The province of Balasakan identified by historians with the ancient Caspiane was located in the southeast of inner Albania. There are two scientific opinions about the location of this province. Some historians believe that the lands of Bazgun – Balasakan were located on the coast of the Caspian Sea, extending from the Absheron Peninsula in the north to the mouth of the Kura in the south. [Hewsen, 2001, map.77; Улубабян, 1977, с.117; Улубабян, 1971, с.178-182]. Others identify Balasakan with the Paytakaran province, which occupied the territory of the Mugan Plain framed in the north by the Kura from the confluence of the Kura with the Aras to the mouth, and bounded by the Talysh Mountains in the west and the Caspian Sea in the east [Мамедова, 2005, с.255]. It has been argued that Balasakan could include both Paytakaran and the present Absheron Peninsula. [Ашурбейли, 1983, с.26]. At least, the author of geographical description of Asia and the Caucasus at the beginning of the 7th century, Ananias of Shirak,

does not identify Balasakan with Paytakaran, referring to the former as one of the ancient Albanian regions, and to the latter as one of the annexed regions [Армянская География, 1877, с.41].

The Chronicle of Zacharias of Mytilene (555) calls this area Christian lands with its own king and its own language [Zachariae Rhetori, 1924, XII, 7, с.327]. This information is confirmed by M.Kaghankatvatsi [Каланкатуаци, 1984, кн.II, гл.2]. Since the reign of Albanian king Vachagan III (488–510), the province of Paytakaran had been part of Caucasian Albania. The capital city of the province – the eponymous Paytakaran (Baylakan) – is located near the settlement of Oren-Qala (Örəŋqala) in Azerbaijan [Мамед-заде, 1983, с.25]. However, some historians believe that Paytakaran should be looked for on the banks of the dried-up branch of the Aras, west of the contemporary city of Salyan [Арутюнян, 1981, с.61-76; Аюбян, 1987, с.103-104].

Saint Grigoris of Albania was martyred by the ruler of Paytakaran, the king of Maskut Sanatruk [Бузанд. 1953, кн.III, гл.5; Хоренский. 1893, кн.III, гл.3; Каланкатуаци, кн.I, гл.14]. According to Koriun, with the assistance of the Balasakan Bishop Mushel, M.Mashtots preached in Balasakan, after which he “bade farewell to the king, bishops and the entire church of Albania” and left for Iberia [Корюн, 1962, гл.XVII]. Both M.Khorenatsi [Хоренский. 1893, кн.III, гл.60] and M.Kaghankatvatsi [Каланкатуаци, кн.I, гл.27] mention Mashtots’ preaching in Balasakan.

There is a seal gem of “The Great Catholicos of Albania and Balasakan”, which M.Hajiyev is inclined to date to the 6th century [Гаджиев, 2004, с.465-479]. This artifact can testify to the special position of the province not only for the Albanian state, but also for the Albanian Church. Analyzing the information provided by written sources, we come to the conclusion that Balasakan was a very significant and important state-political and administrative-territorial formation of the Eastern Caucasus.

The above letter of the 6th century to Albanian Catholicos Abas mentions the Bishop of Balasakan Timothy. In addition to the diocese of the Albanian Church in Balasakan, at the same time (540–554), there was a Nestorian diocese of the Persian Church of the East. The documents of Nestorian Councils provide the names of two bishops – John and James [Касумова, 2005, с.44]. It is appropriate to

suggest that the jurisdiction of the Albanian bishop covered the Albanian Balasakan – Bazgun, while the Nestorian diocese was in Paytakaran which at times was under the administrative control of Atrpatakan (Atropatene).

Diocese of Amaras and Gaband

Gaband with the settlement of Amaras is one of the 12 regions of the Orkhistena province, located on the right bank of the Kura and occupying the territory of the present Khojavend and Jabrayil districts of Azerbaijan.

According to F.Buzand and M.Kaghankatvatsi, St.Gregory the Illuminator preached Gospel in Gaband and founded a temple in Amaras [Бузанд, 1953, кн.III, гл.6; Каланкатуаци, кн.I, гл.14]. Around 338, the grandson of Gregory the Illuminator Grigoris, bishop of Albania and Iberia, who had been killed by pagan Maskuts, was buried in Amaras. The hallows of St.Grigoris were uncovered in 489 under Albanian king Vachagan III, who erected a chapel over them and restored the church destroyed by that time. [Каланкатуаци, кн.I, гл.21-22]. In the early 5th century, M.Mashtots founded the first school in Amaras. The Diocese of Amaras appears to have been established during the reign of King Vachagan III. Earlier, describing the arrival of the king in Amaras, M.Kaghankatvatsi emphasizes: “There was no bishop in Amaras at that time” [Каланкатуаци, кн.I, гл.21]. “The King of the Romans” presented the Bishop of Amaras with the right hand of St.Gregory the Illuminator, which had been in Constantinople. In the Middle Ages, Amaras was known as a monastery, which was a large scriptorium. Amaras suffered frequent destruction (in 1387, it was destroyed by Tamerlane) and was rebuilt several times. Under the altar of the church built in 1858, there is a vaulted tomb made of finely hewn blocks with ornamentation characteristic of the 5th century [Казарян, 2001, с.98].

The Diocese of Amaras included in its jurisdiction the following historical regions: Myus Gaband, Sisakan Vostan, Mukhank, and Kharchlank.

We know the bishops of Amaras and Gaband: Garnik (turn of the 5th–6th centuries), Romik/Horomak (mid 6th century), Mkhitar (early 7th century), Sahak (turn of the 7th–8th centuries), Serob (second quarter of the 9th century).

Three primates of the Albanian Church, prior to their election, had headed the see of Amaras: John II (644–668/671), Joseph I (746/748–763/765), and David II (763/765–767/769).

In the historical territory of the diocese of Amaras, in addition to the monastery of the same name (4th–5th centuries), the following have survived to this day: the Katarovank monastery (5th–17th centuries) – a complex on the top of Mount Ziarat (Dizapayt) where the sons of the Maskut king Sanatruk (Moses, Daniel, Elijah) and other Christians (disciples of St. Grigoris of Albania) were martyred in the 30s of the 4th century; the church of Okhta Drni or “Seven Doors” (6th–7th centuries) which due to its complex centric plan is considered unique and belongs to the type of very rare round multi-apsed buildings; the Bri Yekhtsi monastery in Chorakli (7th–12th–13th centuries); the church of the Gtchavank monastery or “Seven brothers” near Tug (4th–13th centuries) was under the special patronage of the princes of Aranshahs; the Spitak Khach (Spitak Tag) monastery in Chinarli (14th–18th centuries); the Gtich Taglar monastery (13th century); the monastery of St. Jacob Kavak.

Diocese of Gardman

Gardman is one of the eight regions of the Otena province, which used to be on the territory of the contemporary Gadabay and Dashkasan districts. The Gardman principality had a strategically and politically important position on the western borders of Caucasian Albania. From the 6th to the 9th centuries, the region was the ancestral allotment of the Albanian princes – Aranshahs from the Mihranid dynasty [Каланкатуаци, кн.II, гл.17]. The representatives of this dynasty bore the title of “Master of Gardman and the Prince of the Land of Albania” [Каланкатуаци, кн.II, гл.21].

According to Koriun, M. Mashtots preached in Gardman, who was cordially welcomed by Prince Khurs of Gardman [Кориун, гл.XVII, XVIII].

Apart from Gardman itself, the diocese of Gardman had jurisdiction over the neighboring regions of Kolt and Kusta Parnes.

The Albanian chronicler tells about the construction of a magnificent temple in Gardman by the Grand Prince Javanshir “for the whole land of Albania” [Каланкатуаци, кн.II, гл.25].

The diocese of Gardman is mentioned in the 5th century in the “List of Bishoprics” [Ухтанес, кн.I, гл.70, с.100], as well as by M. Kaghankatvatsi and in the documents of the Partaw Council of 706/707.

M. Kaghankatvatsi mentions Gardman bishops John (mid 6th century) and Eliazar (from 686), as well as the Albanian Catholicos who had previously headed the see of Gardman: Nerses Bakur (688/9–705), Theodore (781–785), Gagik (948–958), and Peter (964–982). The bishop of Gardman Stefan is mentioned in documents together with bishop of Syunik Methuselah as having joined the dyophysite party after the Theodosiopolis Council in 632 [Garitte, 1952, p.44]. In the 10th century, in the period preceding the formation of the kingdom of Parisos in the region, three abbots of the Parisos monastery, according to the author of the Third Book of the “History of the Albanians”, were elected as Albanian Catholicos: David V (923–929), David VII (965–971), and Moses IV (987–993).

Among the temples preserved on the historical territory of the diocese of Gardman there are: the Ayrivank church (7th–10th centuries), the ruins of the Khamshivank monastery in the village Beyuk Kara-Murad (9th–10th–13th centuries), the Charek skete on the left bank of the Shamkhirchay River (13th century).

Diocese of Utik

The bishop of Utik is only once mentioned in documents known to us – in the list of bishops who attended the Aghvank Council in 488 [Каланкатуаци, кн.I, гл.26]. That was the time when the residence of the Primate of the Albanian Church was in Chola/Chora. Nevertheless, M. Kaghankatvatsi refers to archbishop Shupkhalishoy as the “archbishop of Partaw”, thus possibly making an anachronism. If the generally accepted dating of the Council is correct, Shupkhalishoy does not have anything to do with Partaw, and the presence of the bishop of Utik at the Council indicates the archiereus who in fact was the canonical head of the vast right-bank region of Caucasian Albania where the summer residence of the Albanian kings was already located.

In addition, we should remember that the Albanian chronicler who rewrote the acts of the Aghvank Council from the archival documents that were in the royal or patriarchal library, omitted o

failed to find the titles of two holy hierarchs who took part in the council meetings, i.e. bishops Ananias and Sahac. Perhaps the names of their dioceses were erased or dropped out of the text used by the author of the “History of the Albanians” or by his scribes. This circumstance presupposes the existence of two more episcopal sees by the 5th century and earlier.

Interestingly, the Albanian chronicler mentions another diocese, which should have been located in the region of Utik, associated with the small town of Gis during the reign of Catholicos Eliazar (683–689): “Then a vision appeared to St. Archbishop Eliazar, ordering him to immediately go to the anointing of the Cross of Christ. He got up early in the morning and, taking with him what he needed, hastily arrived at the said church in the diocese of Ghisavan” [Каланкатуаци, кн.II, гл.33]. The center of this diocese is supposed to be Gis, a place consecrated by many important events for Albania and its Church.

Diocese of Mets Irank

Mets Irank (Great Aran, Mesiran, as Al-Baladhuri [Баладзори, 1927, с.13] refers to it), is one of the twelve historical regions of the right-bank province of Orchistena. The region occupied the lands of the present Kalbajar region of Azerbaijan. The jurisdiction of the Metz Irank diocese covered three historical regions: Mets Arank, Parsakank, and Piank.

An Albanian historian, speaking of the bishops of Mets Irank, mentions St.Simeon (early 7th century), St.Jovel (last third of the 7th century), and St.Abas (551/2–595/6) who became the primate of the Albanian Church.

Later, from the 14th century, the diocese of Mets Irank became the seat of the Albanian Catholicoi and bequeathed to us their cathedral monastery in honor of St.John the Baptist, Gandzasar (10th–13th centuries), a masterpiece of Albanian temple architecture.

In the historical territory of the diocese of Mets Irank, in addition to the Gandzasar monastery, there is the Khutavank (Dadivank) monastery erected in the 6th century over the burial place of St.Dadi (Thaddeus), a disciple of Apostle Thaddeus, mentioned from the 9th century, although the current buildings date back to the 13th century. Another important spiritual center of the diocese

is the Aghoghlan basilica-shaped monastery built in the 5th–6th centuries. And the last but not the least monument is the Ereik Mankunk (Yerits Mankants) monastery built by Hasan-Jalal’s competitors, the princes of Jraber Melik-Israelyans, also in the 13th century. In the 17th–18th centuries, the anti-Catholicosate of the Albanian Gandzasar was located here.

Diocese of Mets Kuenk

Mets Kuenk (Great Kuenk/Kolmank, Meskvan, as Al-Baladhuri [Баладзори, 1927, с.13] refers to it), is one of the twelve historical regions of the right-bank province of Orchistena. The region was located on the territory of the present-day Agdam and Tartar districts of Azerbaijan, including, in addition to Mets Kuenk, the historical regions of Vakunik and Berdadzor.

This region is mentioned by M.Kaghankatvatsi who narrates about the hiding of a silver reliquary with a part of the Cross brought from Jerusalem by M.Mashtots in these lands. It was here that Mashtots’ disciples, who probably founded a brotherhood or a monastic community together with the priests who came from Jerusalem, were martyred by the Huns on the day of Easter in the Astlablur mountain gorge and in the Chlah forest valley [Каланкатуаци, кн.I, гл.28-29].

The Albanian chronicler mentions the following bishops of Mets Kuenk: David (the last third of the 7th century), Israel (the turn of the 7th–8th centuries), the enlightener of the Hunnic country Samuel (before 877), and Michael (from 877).

The four primates of the Albanian Church, prior to being elected as the primates, headed the see of Mets Kuenk: David III (769–778), Joseph II (852–877), Samuel (877–894), and Sahac II (929–947).

Among the temples preserved on the historical territory of the diocese of Mets Kuenk there are: the Avaptuk monastery (12th century), the Akobavank monastery (853), the Kharva church (13th century), the Anapat monastery (12th century), St.George, Karmirvank and Mekhraker churches in Kazanchi (13th century), etc.

The cathedral of the Mets Kuenk diocese may have been the procathedral of the monastery of Apostle Elishe (Yeghishe Arakyal), built in the 5th century (the contemporary building dates back to

the 12th–13th centuries) on the slope of Mount Murovdagh – the place of burial of the holy relics of Apostle Elishe and Albanian king Vachagan III the Pious. Otherwise, the main temple of the diocese could be the church of the Vankasar monastery (5th–7th centuries), built according to a legend by king Vachagan III on a hill near the banks of the Qarqarçay river in Askeran. The very first record of the Vankasar monastery was made by the head of the Georgian Diocese of the Armenian Church, Archbishop Sargis Jalalyants (1819–1879), a famous writer and paleontologist: “At the top of the mountain are the ruins of a monastery, which, according to legend, was the diocesan center of this region” [Джалалянц, 1842, 1856].

Diocese of Gashua (Hosha)

The canonical jurisdiction of the Gashua diocese covered the Otena regions – Shakashen and Tuchkatak – which correspond to the contemporary Shamkir, Tovuz and Ganja districts of Azerbaijan. On the territory of the ancient Scythian kingdom, the historical Sakasena, which gave the name to the Shakashen region, R.Hewsen locates the ancient Albanian temple center Yashu Khosh (from the Uti “khash” – the Moon) [Hewsen, 1992, p.145-146].

M.Kaghankatvatsi mentions Jonah (Iunan), the Bishop of Hosh, as an attendee of the Council of Aghvank in 488, then Bishop Simeon as an attendee of the Council of Partaw in 704. The same Bishop Simeon is in the list of bishops of the Council of Partaw of 706/707.

The center of the diocese was apparently Shamkhor mentioned by Al-Baladhuri among the most important political centers of Caucasian Albania along with Barda, Derbent and Baylakan [Баладзори, 1927, с.203]. The existence of a diocesan center in this area in the 19th century was evidenced by bishop Makar Barkhudaryants [Бархударян, 1895, с.44-45].

One of the important religious centers of the Khosh diocese was the monastery of the Virgin of Khoranashat (1211–1222) in Chinari where historian Kirakos Gandzak and vardapet Vanakan lived until 1225. Currently, the monastery is located literally a hundred meters from the Azerbaijani–Armenian border on the Armenian side.

Another important spiritual center of the diocese was undoubtedly the capital's Berdovank monastery, the “Fortress Monastery” in Shamkhor, which was the venue of the council convened by the Albanian Catholicos Michael between 720–730 against the Paulicians and for considering the incest issue [Каланкатуаци, кн.III, гл.13]. The council was attended by 7 Albanian bishops [Бартикян, 1961, с.32-33].

Among other temples, the remains of which have survived on the territory of the Khosh diocese, the church of Chaparly (4th–5th centuries) can be mentioned.

Diocese of Tsri and Chilbka

The diocese of Tsri is mentioned but once in the “History of the Albanians” in the list of Aghvank Council of 488 attendees. The diocese was represented by Chorbishop Simeon.

The Albanian chronicle only tells that Tsri was an important or capital city of the Country of Chilbs. Until now, researchers have not been able to exactly locate this “Country of Chilbs”. From the sources, it is only clear that the Lpins and Chilbs inhabited the territory adjacent to Caucasian Albania in the northeast, closer to the mountainous part of Southern Dagestan, and lived in the vicinity of the tribes listed in the Elishe list [Егише, 1971, раздел IV, с.255].

It has been argued that the Chilbs might live in the highlands north of the Alazani Valley [Еремян, 1939, с.137]. M.Hajiyev locates them in the upper reaches of the Samur and on the adjacent slopes of the Greater Caucasus Range – on the territory of the traditional settlement of the contemporary Tsakhurs. The researcher links Tsakhurs' endonym Yiqby (plural) to ethnonym “Chilb” [Гаджиев, 1998, с.15-16].

I.Semenov, having studied the story of the Albanian chronicle about the mission of Bishop Israel to the Huns, involving the information provided by Arab historians, comes to the conclusion that the Country of Chilbs should have been Layzan (since the time of Shahinshah Khosrow I Anushirvan – Layzan Shahdom) [Семенов, 2006, с.3-8], which is identified by V. Minorsky with Lahij Valley centered at Lahij [Минорский, 1963, с.33]. The researcher concludes that the Country of Chilbs corresponds to

Layzan, a mountainous region lying on both sides of the Konakhkend Pass of the Greater Caucasus.

However, researcher Y.Jafarov [Джафаров, 1985, с.65-80] noted that a fortress city called Tsri is only found in the work of Albanian historian M.Kaghankatvatsi and that, judging by his reports, this city had some particular status and played a significant role in the political and religious events in Caucasian Albania in the 4th–5th centuries. For the first time, Tsri is mentioned in the story about St.Grigroris, who built a church there and placed parts of the martyr's relics in it. After that, leaving priest Daniel there as a minister, Grigroris, together with his disciples, went to the "country of the Maskuts", where he was captured and martyred [Каланкатуаци, кн.I, гл.14].

In connection with Tsri, the Maskuts' country is mentioned again by the author of the "History of Albania". According to him, a certain Zoroastrian Persian tried to desecrate the church in Tsri, but died in terrible agony. This case was witnessed by an eyewitness – "the Hunnic Bishop Iunan, who was in the country of the Maskuts" [Каланкатуаци, кн.I, гл.19]. As is known, the country of the Maskuts was located on the Caspian plain south of Derbent. Meanwhile, Tsri is also mentioned by Movses Kaghankatvatsi in connection with the country of the Chilbs. And the Chilbs are believed to have lived north of the Kura, in the foothills of the Greater Caucasus. Moreover, the researcher draws attention to the fact that the city of Tsri had been ruled by an Albanian governor of royal lineage, Hochkorik (a bastard of King Esvalen), the only Albanian governor in Albania mentioned by the Albanian chronicler. Then, the city is predominantly referred to as pagan, having a Persian element, but at the same time there is a diocese, which, however, is represented by a chorbishop. The city of Tsri, as M.Kaghankatvatsi clarifies, is a fortress of strategic importance. And on top of everything else, the Hunnic bishop Jonah (Iunan) turned out to be in this city. Also, the author of "The Geography of the 7th century", Ananias of Shirak, mentions the Chilbs among the tribes of "Asiatic Sarmatia". All this and the information given by Elishe, F.Buzand and M.Kaghankatvatsi lead to the conclusion that the author of the Albanian History means Chor/Chol (Derbent) by Tsri and he uses "Chilbs" to denote the people of Chola or a tribe that lived near Chola and constituted part of its population.

Hunnic Diocese

Another territorial-canonical entity that we conditionally include in the jurisdiction of the Albanian Church is the Hunnic missionary diocese. The area of settlement of the Sabir Huns, bordering Caucasian Albania in the northeast, is well known. Varachan, the capital Hunnic city, is localized on the site of the Shah-Senger settlement in the Kayakentsky district of Dagestan [Гаджиев, 1998, с.15-16].

The Hunnic lands, which caused many political troubles to Caucasian Albania, became at the same time the object of special missionary care of the Albanian Church.

Since ancient times, the following rule has been observed in the Church: the Church that converts a non-Christian people to Christianity on the territory that is not part of any of the Local Churches becomes the Mother Church, the kyriarchal Church, for the newly created community, diocese, church. This rule is formulated in Canon 131 (117) of the Council of Carthage in 411, which says: "since it was so decreed some years ago by a plenary council, that whatever churches were erected ... should pertain to the sees of those bishops through whom their return to Catholic unity was brought about...".

We know that it was the bishops of the Albanian Church who spread Christianity among the Huns. The first Albanian bishop to preach among the Huns is mentioned in the story of M.Kaghankatvatsi about the events in the city of Tsri and in the list of primates of the Albanian Church, where the author enlists him before St.Jeremiah who was one of the pioneers of Albanian writing at the end of the 4th century. This bishop, Jonah (Iunan), is called the "bishop of the Huns", and the time of his missionary activity was in the second half of the 4th century [Каланкатуаци, кн.I, гл.19; кн.III, гл.24].

Zacharias of Mytilene provides information about "Kardosta, the bishop of Aran", who not only performed missionary activities and spiritual guidance of the Huns from 537 to 551, but also undertook to translate the texts of the Holy Scriptures into the Hunnic language. This translation, according to a Syrian author, was completed by 544 [Zachariae Rheteri. 1924, XII, 7]. Then, the same author reports that Bishop Macarius was among the Huns from 551–555 and on.

In 80s of the 7th century, Albanian bishop Israel set out on a mission to the country of the Huns.

M.Kaghankatvatsi devotes eight chapters of the Second Book of his Chronicle, from XXXVIII to XLV, to a detailed account of this mission. The Albanian historian ibidem reports on the desire of the Huns to establish a diocese in their country. They say to Bishop Israel: "We pray your holiness that you agree to be our bishop and teacher, establishing the episcopal see in our city of Varachan" [Каланкатуаци, кн.II, гл.42]. As a result, with the Albanian Catholicos Eliazar's blessing, "The blessed Bishop Israel, out of his friendly disposition, voluntarily agreed to go to the Huns, arranged for both countries and provided guidance for the newly converted flock of Christ in order to firmly preserve the vow and the conditions of the union with them" [Каланкатуаци, кн.II, гл.45]. Later, the Hunnic diocese founded by the bishops of Caucasian Albania, along with the other seven missionary diocesan regions, became part of the Metropolitanate of Doros [Артамонов, 1962, с.93-94; Науменко, 2002, с.544-568]. The exact time of founding of this Metropolitanate is unknown, but 787 is considered the earliest possible date, and the end of the 9th century is the latest. Three dioceses of this Metropolitanate were located along the shores of the Caspian Sea: The Hunnic, the Khval and the Astil dioceses. The Metropolitanate apparently existed for a short time, no longer than till the 10th century.

Diocese of Yeut

The bishop of Yeut is mentioned only once among the attendees of the Aghvank Council in the list of the "History of the Albanians" analyzed in the 19th century by K.Patkanov [Каланкатуаци,

1861, кн.I, гл.26]. As is known, K.Patkanov translated from a copy taken from the original in 1841 by priest O.Shakhatuni and then delivered to the St.Petersburg Asiatic Museum. S.Smbatyan who published "The History of the Albanians" in 1984 excludes the name of this diocese from his translation. The work on the last translation involved all known manuscripts of this work (the eleven manuscripts kept in Matendaran and three manuscripts based on microfilms and photocopies). Based on this, we must exclude the probability of the existence of the Yeut diocese, especially since its name does not coincide with any known toponym of Caucasian Albania.

As can be concluded, the spread of Christianity in Caucasian Albania was not uniform and the positions of the Albanian Church, due to the complicated political situation, were not steady in all regions. At the same time, the penetration of Christianity from cities to villages and the increase in the number of believers, observed from the 4th century, resulted in the growth of the number of ecclesiastical-administrative units, i.e. dioceses, the number of which by the 6th century was at least 15. However, a precise clarification of the issue of the territories of the medieval dioceses of the Albanian Church and the amount of the Christian population living on them is for the time being an insoluble problem requiring additional studies involving later sources for analysis. Nevertheless, having analyzed all M.Kaghankatvatsi's reports about the hierarchs and the structural units of the Albanian Church, we have proposed for the first time such a complete list of dioceses under the jurisdiction of the Albanian Primate by the 6th century.

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Dr Imranli-Lowe Kamala
Independent researcher (United Kingdom)

THE PLACE OF CAUCASIAN ALBANIANS IN RUSSIA'S CAUCASUS STRATEGY IN THE LATE EIGHTEENTH-EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURIES

About¹ 300 years ago, in the early 1720s, the territories of the Safavid state in the southern Caucasus were once again turned into an arena for military operations. Unlike in previous centuries, when they were fought over by the Safavids and the Ottomans, this time a new state entered the competition for control of this strategically and militarily important region. The area which *de jure* belonged to the Safavids at the time was contested by the Ottoman Empire, an old rival of the Safavids, and Russia, an emerging power during the period. The major outcome of the Russian advance into the southern Caucasus was the Treaty of Istanbul (Constantinople) of 1724 between Russia and the Ottoman Empire, which divided the region into Russian and Ottoman spheres, with Russia occupying the territories along the Caspian Sea. However, with the Safavids managing to reclaim the territories lost to the Russians and Ottomans between 1732 and 1736, the new division did not last long.

Russia's renewed interest in the region dates back to the last decades of the eighteenth century, when in 1780 Lieutenant-General Alexandre Suvorov arrived in Astrakhan (Hashtarkhan) and began collecting information, *inter alia*, on the provinces of the southern Caucasus for the preparation of a new campaign [Бутков, 1869, II, с.71, III, с.152; Эзов, 1901, с.28; Иоаннисян, 1989, с.255]. The Russian efforts at persuading King Heraclius of Kartli and Kakheti to make a formal appeal for Russian protectorate materialised in autumn 1782 and ended with the signing of a tractate on the subject on 24 July 1783 [Бутков, 1869, III, с.164, II, с.118-119, 122-127].

In early 1784 Alimurad khan, who sought to consolidate his power by proclaiming himself shah of Persia after having taken possession of Isfahan and subjugated most of its provinces, except for the frontier ones, sent his envoy on the Caucasian line in Mozdok to meet Lieutenant-General Pavel Potemkin, commander-in-chief of the Russian forces in the Caucasus. His intention was to secure Russia's support against Agha Mahammad khan of Astrabad, his rival in this struggle for power. In the letter he sent to Potemkin, Alimurad khan asked for recognition of himself as shah and for help against the Ottomans. In return he offered to conclude a trade agreement that was beneficial for the Russians, and to give up the provinces along the Caspian Sea conquered by Russia in 1722–1723, namely Derbent (Darband), Baku, Gilan, Mazandaran and Astrabad with its surrounding areas, as well as ceding the khanates of Qarabağ (Karabakh), Qaradağ (Karadagh), Nakhchivan (Nakhichevan) and Iravan (Erivan) [Бутков, 1869, II, с.147-148; Дубровин, 1886, II, с.169].

Prince Gregory Potemkin of Taurida, having received the highest command from Empress Catherine (r.1762–1796) to take advantage of the disposition of Alimurad khan of Isfahan, postponed the Russian military campaign he had proposed for the occupation of Derbent and other littoral areas along the Caspian Sea. Instead he sent Colonel Vasily Tamara on his behalf, together with the envoy of Alimurad khan, to meet the latter in Isfahan [Бутков, 1868, II, с.150; Дубровин, 1886, II, с.34].

A memorandum given to Colonel Tamara on 30 September 1784 contains Prince Potemkin's vision

¹ Note: The author was awarded a PhD degree from the Centre for Russian, European and Eurasian Studies (CREES), the University of Birmingham, United Kingdom. She has published three books and six articles which mainly deal with the political history of the Caucasus in the medieval, modern and contemporary period. Among her publications are a monograph *Создание армянского государства на Кавказе: Истоки и последствия* (Москва: Научно-издательский центр «Ладомир», 2006) and articles such as 'The Provisional Government and the Armenian Homeland Project', *Revolutionary Russia*, Vol.27, No.2 (2014): 132-56; 'Reconstruction of the 'Armenian Homeland' Notion', *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol.51, No.4 (2015): 540-62; 'The Paris Peace Conference and the Armenian Arguments on Garabagh', *Central Asian Survey*, Vol.34, No.2 (2015): 219-36; and 'The politics of the Caucasus and the regional powers in the medieval and early modern period', *Caucasus Survey*, Vol.8, No.3 (2020): 258-277.

of Russia's politics *vis-à-vis* Persia, and the provisions based on which Russia could recognise Alimurad khan as shah, which included the following:

First. So that he recognised Derbent and other places that we need, the annexation of which we have decided belongs to us. **Second.** So that he made with us a clear and detailed treatise defining the exact boundaries of the Persian Empire. **Third.** So that the lands of King Heraclius, similar to our visions, were precisely designated by boundaries. **Fourth.** So that the Armenian land in its independence was restored. **Fifth.** So that a clear decision was made about those lands that are assigned to compose the province or kingdom of Albania too... [Иоаннисян, 1947, с.282-283]

In this memorandum Prince Potemkin also suggested that "[a]t the same time it would be advisable to establish Armenian and Albanian governments, and to make necessary provisions with them" [Иоаннисян, 1947, с.283].

The establishment of an Albanian polity was also touched upon in a letter by Prince Potemkin to Catherine II, where the prince noted that "[n]ow the time has come to realise the plan for the establishment of the Albanian kingdom, which was proposed a long time ago by Your Imperial Majesty" [АВПРИ, ф.5, оп.5/1 (1779-1783), д.591, ч.1, л.224]. The diary of Alexander Khrapovitsky, State Secretary under Catherine II for about ten years, also sheds some light on Russian plans regarding the construction of an Albanian state. On 17 August 1787 Khrapovitsky [1862, II, с.37] wrote in his diary that "[i]n the dower chest I found for myself and read the secret project of Prince Potemkin of Taurida for taking advantage of the Persian turmoil, occupying Baku and Derbent, and by annexing Gilan to create an Albania as a future legacy of the Grand Duke Constantine Pavlovich."

The diary of Archbishop Joseph Argutinsky, head of the Astrakhan diocese of the Armenian Echmiadzin Catholicosate, gives further insight into this subject. It appears from the data provided by the archbishop [Эзов, 1901, с.28; Дубровин, 1886, III, с.58] that he was asked a lot of questions by Count Suvorov and Prince Potemkin in 1780 in the light of their planned military campaign to occupy the littoral provinces along the Caspian Sea. Their questions included

ones about the state of the Armenian Echmiadzin Catholicosate, Catholicos and the Armenian nation, as well as Karabakh *meliks* [counts], about whom he provided Suvorov with a special memorandum. The archbishop also met with various questions on the subject from Lieutenant-General Potemkin on 21 December 1782 (1783 according to Nicholas Dubrovin [1886, II, с.27]), which he addressed as well [Иоаннисян, 1947, с.204-212]. Prince Potemkin also demanded in 1784 that Argutinsky send him a person who could provide him with the necessary information about the Armenians, as well as Karabakh *meliks*. The archbishop in his turn entrusted this task to Stephan Davydov. Prince Potemkin wrote twice to Davydov to secretly try to inspire them to make formal appeals to Empress Catherine about Russian protectorate [Бутков, 1869, III, с.181, 284].

According to Dubrovin [1886, II, с.168], concession of the abovementioned provinces offered by Alimurad khan could realise the dreams of Prince Potemkin about the establishment of a vast Christian state under Russian protectorate in the southern Caucasus, the reigns of the governance of which King Heraclius of Kartli-Kakheti hoped would be in his hands under the supreme rule of Russia. Abgar Ioannisian [1947, с.129], who had at his disposal a great number of official documents related to the subject, considered that the Russian diplomacy's possible plans at the time included the expansion of the borders of the Kartli-Kakheti kingdom by annexing the Ganja khanate, and probably a number of other Azerbaijani provinces, as well as organisation of vassal Armenian and Albanian states at the expense of other khanates. Based on a draft project by Archbishop Argutinsky, drawn up in 1783 in direct relation to the negotiations with Prince Potemkin, Ioannisian [1947, с.47-48, 1951, с.267] wrote that an Armenian state was to be created in the Ararat region with its capital in Vagharshapat or Ani. It can be assumed that this Armenian state was imagined at the expense of the Iravan khanate, as well as that of the Kars pashalyk of the Ottoman Empire, of which Ani was a part, while the rest of the eastern part of the southern Caucasus outside the areas assigned for Kartli-Kakheti was to be placed into Albania.

A historical reference prepared by Colonel Stephan Burnashev, commissioner of Prince Potemkin under King Heraclius of Kartli-Kakheti from 3 April 1783, on Karabakh khans and *meliks*,

is also of interest here. The material provides some historical data about “Albania” under Safavid Shah Abbas, Nadir shah, and Panah and Ibrahim khans of Karabakh. According to this document, five *melikdoms* [counties] of Karabakh were founded by Shah Abbas, and the situation continued until the time of Safavid Shah Huseyn, when the Ottomans occupied “Azerbaijan with all adjacent provinces, including Signag [*melikdoms*]”. The narrative then states that after withdrawing the Ottomans from Azerbaijan, Nadir shah restored the *melikdoms* as “palace fiefdoms” with five *meliks* from the same dynasties, as was the case under Shah Abbas [Иоаннисян, 1947, с.258]. Disregarding some factual inaccuracies in this account, it demonstrates that Karabakh was one of the major parts of the concept of “Albania”. This is also evident from the letters addressed by and to the Albanian catholicoses in the 1720s [Иоаннисян, 1967, II (2), с.27, 31], Catholicos Johannes of “all Albania” (or “Albanian” Ganjasar Catholicos Johannes) in the 1780s [Иоаннисян, 1947, с.244-245, 259], and other available evidence.

The Russian visions of the 1780s did not materialise further after the signing of the tractate with King Heraclius in 1783. With the outbreak of a new Russian-Ottoman war in September 1787, Colonel Burnashev, upon receiving an order from Prince Potemkin, had to call the Russian troops back from Kartli-Kakheti and return to Russia [Бутков, 1869, II, с.154-155, 195-196]. This sudden turn of events dealt a blow to the plans of the Karabakh *meliks*, who were hoping to restore the Albanian kingdom with the support of Russia, in the realisation of which the Albanian Catholicos Johannes, *melik* Abov and *melik* Mejlum (Majnun in some sources) were the most active. Soon after the Russian withdrawal from the southern Caucasus, in 1788 the Albanian population of Karabakh, namely five hundred families from the Gulustan *melikdom* of *melik* Abov, one of five *melikdoms* of Karabakh khanate, left their homeland and moved to Shamkir in the Ganja khanate. A thousand more families from the Chilaberd *melikdom* of *melik* Mejlum, also in the Karabakh khanate, were settled in Shamshaddil by Javad khan of Ganja. After several years, *melik* Abov left Ganja and, together with his people, moved to Bolnisi in the kingdom of Kartli-Kakheti. However, due to his disagreements with King Heraclius, *melik* Abov could no longer stay there, and in 1795, having reconciled with Ibrahim khan of Karabakh, he

returned to his homeland, leaving it again in 1799 [Raffi, 1882, pp.153, 159-160, 233; Раффи, 1991, с.88, 91, 125; Потто, 1901, XII, с.29; Бутков, 1869, II, с.195].

Meanwhile, Agha Mahammad khan of Astrabad, of the Turkic tribe of Gajars, having defeated his rivals in the struggle for possession of Persia, decided to establish his power over the khanates that were *de facto* independent. Having crossed to the left bank of the Araz River, he sent his brother Aligulu khan with troops to Iravan. Subjugating this khanate, Agha Mahammad khan moved into the Karabakh khanate. He besieged the Shusha fortress for thirty-three days. Having faced a solid defence, the khan decided not to waste time and attacked Tiflis, which he took on 12 September 1795. He then made a second attempt to capture Shusha. Having failed again, Agha Mahammad khan moved to the Mughan steppe and settled along the Araz River [Бутков, 1869, II, с.336-341; Mirzə Camal Cavanşir Qarabaği, 1989, s.123-124; Mirzə Yusif Qarabaği, 1991, s.29-31; Mir Mehdi Xəzani, 1991, s.130-132].

When Agha Mahammad khan stood on Mughan and part of his troops occupied Shirvan in November 1795, Russia had already drawn up plans for a new military campaign. The actions under Count Valerian Zubov were supposed to open from three directions: 1) by the Caspian Sea flotilla to Baku and Talysh shores; 2) with the troops from Kartli-Kakheti to Ganja and Karabakh, but not to Iravan and other regions adjacent to the Ottoman Porte, so not to provoke the Turks by approaching the Ottoman borders; and 3) with the main forces from Kizlyar, through Derbent and Baku, to the juncture of the Araz and Kur rivers [Бутков, 1869, II, с.360-361]. The Russian vision in the war against Agha Mahammad khan consisted mainly of the realisation of the abovementioned provisions, formulated in 1784 under Alimurad khan [Бутков, 1869, II, с.365]. As was the case in the 1780s, so during this campaign Echmiadzin Archbishop Joseph Argutinsky was the major source of information on the southern Caucasus, as well as on the surrounding regions of Persia and the Ottoman Empire. He was also closely involved in the practical implementation of the Russian goals [Дубровин, 1886, III, с.57, 84].

King Heraclius, encouraged by the arrival of Russian troops, allied with the Ibrahim khan of Karabakh to punish Javad khan of Ganja and *melik* Mejlum of Chilaberd, whom he considered as guides

of Agha Mahammad khan in his campaign against Tiflis. Attacking Ganja, the allies kept it under siege for a long time. In the end, Javad khan surrendered, peace was made, and *melik* Mejlum was killed [Mirzə Camal Cavanşir Qarabaği, 1989, s.124; Mir Mehdi Xəzani, 1991, s.132; Rzaqulu bəy Mirzə Camal oğlu, 1991, s. 222].

According to Raffi [1882, p.202; Раффи, 1991, c.111], who visited Karabakh in 1881 to collect data for his history of the *melikdoms*, “[h]e [*melik* Mejlum] took with him to his grave a broad and thorough programme for the restoration of the *melikdoms* of Karabakh, which was significantly different from the programmes of other *meliks* and Archbishop Hovsep [Joseph Argutinsky].” In one of the manuscripts at his disposal Raffi [1882, note on p.203; Раффи, 1991, прим. с.111-112] read that Agha Mahammad khan promised *melik* Mejlum not only that he would destroy Ibrahim khan and restore the *melikdoms* of Karabakh, but also that he would transfer control of Kartli–Kakheti to him. For that reason, when *melik* Mejlum was reproached for his participation in the devastation of Tiflis, he bitterly replied: “We have been deceived enough ... How long will we be tempted by illusions? ... Our well-wishers confront us with their enemies, while they themselves benefit ... We have more reason to trust the Persian shah than others. Shah Abbas approved the rights of the *meliks* of Karabakh, Nadir confirmed them, and Agha Mahammad khan promised me more than his predecessors...” [Raffi, 1882, pp.202-203; Раффи, 1991, c.111]

Following the death of Catherine II on 17 November 1796, Count Zubov, in whose hands all power and control after Prince Potemkin was concentrated, received an order dated 4 December 1796 from Count Nicholas Saltykov, President of the State Military Collegium, to suspend hostilities and return to the Russian border [Бутков, 1869, II, c.422]. Agha Mahammad khan, taking advantage of the Russian troops’ sudden retreat, initiated a new campaign in the spring of 1797. His intention was to carry out a main attack on Kartli–Kakheti after killing Ibrahim khan of Karabakh and to drive the inhabitants of Shamakhy (Shemakha), Shaki (Sheki), Salyan, Talysh, Kartli–Kakheti and other places into his hereditary provinces of Mazandaran and Astrabad. But the murder of Agha Mahammad khan in Shusha prevented the implementation of these plans [Бутков, 1869, II, c.427, 430-431].

These events accelerated the annexation of Kartli–Kakheti by Russia with the manifesto of Alexander I of 12 September 1801, which was based on the manifesto signed by his predecessor Pavel on 22 December 1800, not implemented due to the death of the latter on 12 March 1801. The annexation of Kartli–Kakheti was followed by that of the Ganja and other Azerbaijani khanates and sultanates by Russia in the period from 1801 to 1828. The *de facto* situation was reaffirmed by the Treaties of Gulistan of 12 October 1813 and Turkmanchay of 10 February 1828, signed by Russia and the Gajarid state following the 1804-1813 and 1826-1828 wars respectively.

The administrative–territorial re-organisation of the southern Caucasus following the step-by-step annexation of its polities reveals Russian intentions *vis-a-vis* the region. Thus, after the annexation of Kartli–Kakheti by Russia on 12 September 1801, the Georgian *guberniia* (province) was formed based on the kingdom, the area of which expanded over time with the incorporation of newly annexed polities. Apart from the area of the former kingdom, the *guberniia* included the Pambak *okrug* (district), formerly a part of the Iravan khanate, occupied by Russia in 1801 and reformed into the Lori *uezd* (district), and the Shuragel sultanate, a vassal of the Iravan khanate, occupied by Russia in 1805. These two units were merged into the Pambak–Shuragel distance. The *guberniia* also included the Gazakh and Shamshaddil sultanates, re-organised into distances, and the Ganja khanate, immediately after the annexation of which in 1804 the city of Ganja was renamed Elizavetpol and the khanate became the Elizavetpol *uezd* [Семёнов, 1885, V, с.857; Кавказский календарь на 1861, 1860, отдел 3, с.12-14; Мильман, 1966, с.52, 56-57, 62-63].

Russia also constructed an Armenian *oblast* (province) at the expense of the Iravan and Nakhchyvan khanates on 21 March 1828, which was dissolved in 1840. Erivan and Nakhchyvan *uezds*, created out of the *oblast*, were included in the newly established Georgia–Imeretia *guberniia* with its centre in Tiflis. The latter, among other units, included the Elizavetpol *uezd*, which combined the area of the former *uezd* of the same name and the former Gazakh and Shamshaddil distances, and the Alexandropol *uezd*, which combined the area of the former Pambak–Shuragel distance and part of the Borchaly distance. In 1846 all these units were transferred to the newly organised Tiflis *guberniia*

[АКАК, 1878, VII, док.437, с.487; Потто, 1901, с.242-243, 302-303; Семёнов, 1885, V, с.857].

As the reforms demonstrate, the area of the former Kartli–Kakheti kingdom was indeed expanded at the expense of the neighbouring Ganja khanate and some smaller polities, as projected in the 1780s. The construction of an Armenian *oblast* on the basis of the Iravan and Nakhchivan khanates was also partly in line with the Russian projection. The Russian visions of 1783 involved questions of whether to include the Erivan *oblast* in a new state to be made of Karabakh and Karadagh khanates or to make it a part of the Kartli–Kakheti kingdom [Бутков, 1869, III, с.176; Иоаннисян, 1947, с.250]. They also, as described in Count Zubov's instructions of 1796 to General Rimsky–Korsakov, which the latter needed to keep highly secret, suggested strengthening Georgia by annexing the Iravan and Ganja khanates [Дубровин, 1886, III, с.182]. These ideas were reflected in the administrative changes that took place in 1828 and 1840. However, these were not political entities, but administrative units ruled like the inner *gubernii*s of Russia, with their governors appointed by Saint Petersburg. Deprived of even formal kingship in the case of Kartli–Kakheti and without a promised “independence” in the case of the Armenian *oblast*, there remained no traces of either “Armenian” or “Georgian” in the titles of these units by 1846.

As for the concept of a province or kingdom of “Albania” projected in the 1780s, unlike “Georgian *guberniia*” and “Armenian *oblast*”, the administrative reforms did not create any unit with “Albania” in its title. The littoral khanates along the Caspian Sea, namely Derbent, Guba and Baku, were turned into provinces, as were the Shaki (Sheki), Shirvan and Karabakh khanates, which were eventually turned into provinces too. Also, an administrative unit called “Muslim *okrug*”, with its centre in Shusha, was formed in 1824, consisting of the Karabakh, Shaki, Shirvan and Talysh provinces, while the provinces of Baku, Guba and Derbent were merged into the Dagestan *okrug*, with its centre in Derbent [Мильман, 1966, с.67]. Under the decree of the Russian Senate of 10 April 1840, the “Muslim” *okrug* was replaced by “Caspian” *oblast* with its centre in Shamakhy, and consisted of the *uezds* of Shusha (former Karabakh province), Nukha (former Shaki province), Lankaran (former Talysh province), Baku and Shamakhy (former Shirvan province and Salyan).

The *uezds* of Derbent (the former Derbent, Tabasaran and Karakaytag provinces) and Guba (the former Guba province with the Samur *okrug*) were merged into a military *okrug* [Мильман, 1966, с.113].

In other words, neither the littoral areas along the Caspian Sea nor the Karabakh khanate was arranged into a projected “Albania”, the latter being turned into a province of the same name in 1822. In an obvious change of tactics, the Russian authorities also started stripping the Albanian Catholicosate of its dioceses and flocks in areas which were annexed one-by-one by Russia and subordinated to the Armenian Echmiadzin Catholicosate. At the time of the Russian annexation of Kartli–Kakheti in 1801, the jurisdiction of the Albanian Catholicosate covered an area from Derbent in the north, with other khanates and sultanates on the left bank of the Kur River, to the Karabakh and Ganja khanates and the Gazakh and Shamshaddil sultanates on the right bank, as well as some parts of Kartli–Kakheti with two medieval Albanian monasteries like Haghbat and Sanain in its territory [Barkhudariants, 1907, II, p.169; Raffi, 1882, note on p.151; Раффи, 1991, прим. с.87; Каянкатвацци, 1861, с.363].

In a letter of 9 August 1806 addressed to Count Ivan Gudovich, commander-in-chief of the Russian forces in the Caucasus (1806–1809), the Albanian Catholicos Israel complained about the subordination of his Elizavetpol flock by the late Count Pavel Tsitsianov, predecessor of Gudovich in 1803–1806, to Ioannes (Hovannes), Echmiadzin Archbishop in Tiflis. Presenting Elizavetpol, Karabakh, Shaki and Shirvan as Albanian provinces that had never before depended on Araratian (Echmiadzin) catholicoses, Israel asked Count Gudovich by what rights and reasons the Elizavetpol diocese had been subjected to Echmiadzin. If it was due to Elizavetpol being taken by Russian forces, then – Israel reproached – Karabakh had voluntarily joined Russia, so why “offend the Amaras monastery [seat of Catholicos Israel] which had never been so offended by any absolute ruler, especially when Karabakh, Elizavetpol, Shaki and Shirvan were under the rule of various khans”. “And even more so”, he continued, “secular governance should not at all touch spiritual order by any law” [АКАК, 1869, III, док.149, с.79-80]. Like the Albanian Catholicos Israel, the Albanian flock in Elizavetpol also did not want to obey the new subordination: about five hundred people gathered at the Elizavetpol monastery and threw stones at the

Echmiadzin bishop Minas, who came to confiscate the church tax collected by the Albanian Catholicos Israel [AKAK, 1869, III, док.151, с.80; Imranli-Lowe, 2015, p.553].

In his reply of 16 November 1806 to this letter from Catholicos Israel, Count Gudovich tried to substantiate the subordination of the Elizavetpol flock to the Armenian Echmiadzin Catholicosate, by means of the subjugation of the Ganja khanate in 1804, before the Karabakh khanate was annexed to the Russian Empire in 1805. According to the count's explanation, this fact deprived the Albanian Catholicos Israel of his right to rule over the Elizavetpol diocese, as he was not yet a subject of the Russian Emperor. Gudovich noted that this subordination by the Russian Emperor was also due to the "efforts and loyalty to the highest throne of His Imperial Majesty" of the Armenian Archbishop Ioannes, thus considering it impossible for Israel to be restored to his former right to rule over this diocese [Агаян, 1972, I, док.323, с.388].

A similar reply was given by Gudovich on 11 March 1807 to the letter of 12 February 1807 by Archbishop Sergius (Sargis) about wrong interventions in the affairs of the Haghbat monastery by the Archbishop Ioannes. Sergius was the shepherd of the Albanians living in Kartli-Kakheti, including the refugees from Karabakh in the 1790s, one of them being himself [Агаян, 1972, I, док.204, с.284, док.343, с.401-402; Raffi, 1882, pp.233-238; Раффи, 1991, с.126-128]. The new settlers had been allocated vast tracts of land in Lori, Bolnisi and Borchaly by King Heraclius and King Georgy of Kartli-Kakheti. These areas were formerly part of the Albanian kingdom and were where the medieval Haghbat monastery, one of the seats of the Albanian Catholicosate in the Middle Ages, was located. In his letter of January 1805 addressed to Count Tsitsianov, then commander-in-chief of the Russian forces in the Caucasus, Sergius asked the count to confirm him in his rights as Archbishop of the Haghbat monastery, to which King Georgy had appointed him. The jurisdiction of this diocese, according to Sergius, spread over all monophysites living in the kingdom, except for a small part belonging to the Echmiadzin monastery [AKAK, 1866, I, док.575, с.463, док.877, с.637; Потто, 1901, XII, с.29-30; Каганкатваци, 1861,

с.363; Barkhudariants, 1895, p.6; Бархударянц, 2009, с.19; Агаян, 1972, I, док.204, с.284].

In his abovementioned reply of 11 March 1807, Gudovich reproached Sergius that "Archbishop Ioannes was made leader of the Armenian clergy in Georgia by [Echmiadzin] Patriarch¹ Daniil [25 September 1804 and 1805] and approved in this capacity by His Imperial Majesty [29 August 1805]; therefore, you should now give account to him in everything as a subordinate, and I by force of this highest command cannot satisfy your request that you should not be under his authority" [Агаян, 1972, I, док.198, с.257, док.263 and док.264, с.327, док.284, с.342, док.343, с.401-402]. However, as another letter from Gudovich dated 9 November 1807 addressed to the Archbishop Sergius shows, the latter was collecting church taxes from the villagers of Kakheti belonging to the Haghbat monastery without reporting to the Echmiadzin Archbishop Ioannes. In this letter Gudovich asked Sergius to immediately come to Tiflis and give the required reports to Ioannes, as the latter needed to send them to Echmiadzin. In the case of non-fulfilment of the order, Gudovich would take other measures against him [Агаян, 1972, I, док.375, с.425-426].

Gudovich's letters to Catholicos Israel and Archbishop Sergius demonstrate an open preference for the Echmiadzin Catholicosate over the Albanian one. His substantiation of the forceful subordination of the flock of the independent Albanian Catholicosate to Echmiadzin reveals both a contradiction in his answer and a real reason behind this act. The fact that Echmiadzin was located in the territory of the Iravan khanate, which had then not yet been conquered by Russia, shows a failure by Gudovich and meant that the occupation of the Ganja khanate before Karabakh came under Russian rule could not have been the real reason for this subordination. The count was more sincere in the second part of his answer, which explained this subordination through the efforts and loyalty of the Armenian Archbishop Ioannes to Russia, and implied that this preference was connected with a role allocated to Echmiadzin and Armenians in the realisation of Russia's imperial agenda. The Russian visions in this regard were reiterated in the rescript of 12 September 1801 addressed to

¹ Note: Russian sources of the eighteenth to the early twentieth centuries, including those involved in this research, mostly refer to Albanian and Armenian catholicoses as patriarchs and the catholicosates as patriarchates.

General-Lieutenant Carl Knorring, commander-in-chief of the Russian forces in the Caucasus in 1801–1803, by the Emperor Alexander within the framework of the annexation of Kartli–Kakheti by the Russian Empire. In this rescript, the emperor wrote, *inter alia*, about the usefulness of attracting Armenians to the Russian borders, which he considered one of the most reliable means of establishing the numerical superiority of Christians, and to that end, to “patronise the Araratian Patriarchal monastery of Echmiadzin and keep friendly relations with the head of this church” [AKAK, 1866, I, док.548, пункт 11, с.436].

Unlike the Armenian Echmiadzin catholicoses, who were careful in their communications with Russia in the eighteenth century in order not to cause suspicions about their Muslim rulers, the Albanian catholicoses and *meliks* had been striving to bring Russian rule to the region from the time of Peter the Great. For that reason, the step-by-step dissolution of the Albanian Catholicosate could not have been only due to the loyalty and efforts of the Armenian clergy mentioned by Gudovich. In line with its Caucasus strategy and the tactics of its realisation, Russia aimed at bringing and keeping the Echmiadzin Catholicosate under its control and using its influence among the Armenians of the Ottoman Empire and Persia for the advancement of expansionist policies *vis-à-vis* these countries. The annexation of the areas populated by Christian Albanians in the southern Caucasus was considered as completed in the eyes of the Russian authorities by 1806, and consequently the Albanians lost their previous importance for them. It was considered reasonable to gain the sympathy of Echmiadzin by fulfilling its expectations, among which the subordination of the dioceses of the independent Albanian Catholicosate to Echmiadzin had an important place.

In 1808, the Albanian Catholicos Israel died. This gave the Armenian Archbishop Ioannes a good reason to realise the long-planned abolition of the Albanian Catholicosate, by asking Count Gudovich to implement his promise of influencing the Russian Emperor, “at the request of the late [Echmiadzin] Patriarch Daniil”, and to subordinate the flock of the Albanian Catholicosate in the territories recently occupied by Russia to the Tiflis diocese of Echmiadzin, which was headed by himself [AKAK, 1869, III, док.152, с.81]. According to a report of 22 April 1903 by Leonid Frenkel, acting prosecutor

of the Echmiadzin Armenian–Gregorian Synod, by 1806 Echmiadzin Catholicos Daniil had actually withdrawn from the management of the Armenian Church. The reins of governance passed into the hands of Archbishop Nerses [Ashtaraketsi]. The latter understood very well that it was not enough to create some semblance of the Echmiadzin Synod, the High Council, which was formed in 1808. It was also necessary to enlist strong external support for this institution, without which it could be in danger not only from the Muslim Persian government, but also from the point of view of recognising its decrees as non-binding for the Georgian (Tiflis) and Astrakhan Armenian consistories [РГИА, ф.821, оп.7, д.96, ч.III, л.211]. With these intentions, on 11 August 1808 Archbishop Nerses had a petition addressed to the Russian emperor signed by the dying Catholicos Daniil. Without waiting for an answer to this request, the catholicos died on 8 October 1808, and Efrem, who had replaced Joseph Argutinsky in 1799 as head of the Astrakhan diocese of Echmiadzin, was elected Echmiadzin Catholicos. Bishop Reteos, who was sent to Russia after Efrem, had an assignment to solicit the emperor, among other things, that the clergymen of “Albania and Ganjasar” must depend on the Supreme Council of the Holy See of Echmiadzin and Ararat, and that with regard to the management of churches they must obey the orders of the Supreme Council and the Ararat “Patriarch”. As Frenkel writes, the petition succeeded and was finally realised by 1810. This marked the beginning of the history of the creation of the future Echmiadzin Armenian–Gregorian Synod [РГИА, ф.821, оп.7, д.96, ч.III, л.211–213об.].

More and more disappointed with the attitude of the Russian officials in the Georgian *guberniia*, the Albanian refugees, who had settled in the area in the 1790s under King Heraclius and King Georgy of Kartli–Kakheti, started gradually returning back to Karabakh, with *melik* Jumshud of Varanda and his people being the first to return in 1805, followed by those from Gulustan *melikdom* and Archbishop Sergius in 1809 and 1812. Although Archbishop Sergius returned to Karabakh in 1809 after the death of Albanian Catholicos Israel as the Karabakh Archbishop “appointed” by Russia, soon after this he declared himself Catholicos with the support of Mehdigulu khan of Karabakh. This act was opposed both by the Echmiadzin Catholicosate and by the Russian authorities [AKAK, 1873, V, док.518, с.437,

док.522, с.443; Raffi, 1882, pp.251-263, 293-295; Раффи, 1991, с.135-139, 154-155; Агаян, 1978, II, док.89, с.124].

As is apparent from a letter by Echmiadzin "Patriarch" Efrem (1809–1830) to Russian General Nicholas Rtishchev on 18 February 1814, Echmiadzin did not have any success in the subordination of the Christians in Elizavetpol, Karabakh, Shaki, Shamakhy and the surrounding provinces [AKAK, 1873, V, док.519, с.439]. One of the reasons for this was that Sergius continued to act as an Albanian catholicos and refused to submit to Echmiadzin. General Rtishchev, in his letter to Prince Dmitry Orbeliani on 19 October 1813, had instructed the latter to summon Sergius and "strictly forbid him to even think of arbitrarily calling himself Karabakh Patriarch", and that the Russian Emperor recognised only "Echmiadzin Patriarch" Efrem [AKAK, 1873, V, док.518, с.437]. The instruction was implemented, as can be seen from Orbeliani's report of 1 November 1813 [STsIA, fn.2, l.1, fl.386, pp.2-20p.]. However, according to Efrem's letter of 18 December 1815, Sergius still continued to act as "Patriarch" [AKAK, 1873, V, док.522, с.443; STsIA, fn.2, l.1, fl.386, pp.11-120p.]. Nevertheless, in 1815, Echmiadzin, with the help of the Russian authorities, compelled Sergius to give up the title of catholicos and accept the title of metropolitan with the rights of archbishop [Кавказский календарь на 1852, 1851, с.269; Raffi, 1882, pp.295-296; Раффи, 1991, с.155; Barkhudariants, 1907, II, pp.168-169; Агаян, 1972, I, прим.144, с.659].

According to Makar Barkhudariants, dissolution of the ancient Albanian Catholicosate started immediately after the appointment of Nerses Ashtaraketsi as head of the Georgian diocese of Echmiadzin. The negotiations that the Echmiadzin Catholicos Efrem and Archbishop Nerses held with the Russian authorities on the subject materialised, and in 1815 the Albanian Catholicos Sergius was officially appointed metropolitan of Ganjasar or Karabakh [Barkhudariants, 1907, II, pp.169-170]. Sergius died in 1828 and was followed by Baghdasar, in the title of metropolitan. Although the Albanian Catholicosate was abolished in 1815, the metropolitanate also indicated certain autonomy, which suggests that Russia did not want to dissolve the Albanian ecclesiastical institution straight away. This can be explained both by Echmiadzin's location in the territory of the Iravan khanate, which had not yet been occupied by Russia, and Russian tactics of

making Echmiadzin demonstrate enough zeal for the successful advancement of Russian interests *vis-à-vis* the Ottoman and Persian provinces.

The Archbishop Nerses, who became head of the Georgian diocese of Echmiadzin in 1813 [AKAK, 1873, V, док.519, с.438-439], during a new war with Persia in 1826–1828, issued admonitions to the Armenian people, undertook to deliver news about the enemy, and sent Bishop Stephen and Archmandrite Nicholas to help with the resettlement of Armenians to the newly Russian-annexed khanates of Iravan and Nakhchivan, as well as Karabakh [AKAK, 1878, VII, док.436, с.486, док.597, с.628]. With the rescript of 25 January 1828 addressed to the Archbishop Nerses, Russian Emperor Nicholas awarded him with the Order of Saint Alexander Nevsky in commemoration of the merits rendered by him "during the entire continuation of hostilities, and as a sign of My special benevolence to the entire Armenian people". "For a long time", as stated in the aforementioned rescript, "and on many occasions you have shown excellent commitment to Russia; especially in the present war with the Persians" [AKAK, 1878, VII, док.205, с.252].

However, immediately upon conclusion of the Turkmanchay Treaty of 10 February 1828 at the end of the war between Russia and Persia, Count Ivan Paskevich, commander-in-chief of the Russian forces in the Caucasus in 1827–1831, removed Archbishop Nerses from management of the spiritual affairs of the Armenians under the supreme leadership of Catholicos Efrem in the temporary administration created for the newly-occupied Iravan and Nakhchivan khanates on 6 October 1827. The count considered his activities biased in favour of the Armenians [Потто, 1901, XII, с.241, 243]. Soon after the signing of this treaty, the abovementioned Armenian *oblast* was established on the area of these two newly annexed khanates, by the decree of 21 March 1828 by Nicholas I of Russia. On the basis of Article 15 of the Turkmanchay Treaty, about 36,000 Armenians moved from Persia to the Armenian *oblast* [AKAK, 1878, VII, док.437, с.487; Шопен, 1852, с.639-642]. According to the Treaty of Adrianople, concluded at the end of the war with the Ottoman Empire in 1829, "more than 14 thousand families with up to 90 000 souls" were resettled to Russia, the majority of whom consisted of Armenians, including "two Armenian archbishops who had great influence on the people" [AKAK, 1878, VII, док.829, с.845-846].

About one year after the Iravan khanate, where the Echmiadzin Catholicosate was located, came under Russian rule, the Russian Minister of the Interior Dmitry Bludov in his letter of 15 March 1829 to Count Paskevich, on the emperor's order, came up with a proposal for the elaboration of a programme for future regulation of the administration of the Echmiadzin Catholicosate. On 31 December 1829 Count Paskevich informed Baron Bludov of the establishment of a Secret Committee on the elaboration of the foundations of the future regulation. On 8 January 1830, the committee began its first activities and the document entitled "Regulation on the Administration of the Armenian-Gregorian Church in Russia" was adopted on 11 March 1836 [РГИА, ф.821, оп.7, д.96, ч.III, л.214об.; Полное собрание законов Российской Империи, 1837, XI (1), док.8970, с.194-209].

Before its adoption the draft version had been discussed more than once. As appears from a letter by Baron Gregory Rosen, successor of Count Paskevich in 1831–1838, to Count Bludov, dated 17 September 1835, after receiving the draft version of the regulation with amendments by the fourth meeting of the Committee established for the consideration of this document, Baron Rosen contacted Catholicos Ioannes on 2 July 1835 regarding the division of the southern Caucasian dioceses, as suggested in the draft Article 56. The Echmiadzin Catholicos, as noted by Baron Rosen, found the division of the "Armenian–Gregorian" Church in the region into four dioceses to be fair and agreed with him in everything; but, meanwhile, he advised excluding the Tatev monastery from the Karabakh diocese, allegedly "to avoid inconveniences and displeasure that might arise between the clergy and the people," and wanted to "transfer it with all its flock to the Erivan diocese, the head of which is the catholicos himself." The Echmiadzin Catholicos's comment was taken into account [АКАК, 1881, VIII, док.211, с.293-294, док.208, с.291-292].

Based on the advice of Catholicos Ioannes, Baron Rosen suggested a new draft for Article 56. According to this, out of six "Armenian–Gregorian" dioceses in Russia, four included the former parishes of the Albanian Catholicosate. Thus, the Georgian diocese included the Albanian churches in the Elizavetpol "*okrug*" (district), the distances of Borchaly, Gazakh and Shamshaddil and a part of Pambak; the Erivan diocese included the Tatev

metropolitanate; the Karabakh diocese consisted of the parishes in the provinces of Karabakh (excluding the Tatev metropolitanate with its flock), Shaki and Talysh; and the Shirvan diocese comprised the parishes in the provinces of Shirvan, Guba, Baku and Derbent. The suggested version by Rosen also contained the following note: "The Ganjasar metropolitanate remains in the Karabakh province, as the current archbishop of Karabakh is also the metropolitan of this province" [АКАК, 1881, VIII, док.211, с.293-294]. Article 56 was almost accepted as suggested by Baron Rosen, but with one change: it excluded the last note regarding the Ganjasar metropolitanate from the adopted version [Полное собрание законов Российской Империи, 1837, XI (1), док.8970, с.200-201; АВПРИ, ф.343, оп.461, д.8].

According to Frenkel's abovementioned account of 22 April 1903, seventy years ago, when there arose the idea of the forthcoming division of the "sick man" [Ottoman Empire] expressed by the Emperor Nicholas I, the Armenians found themselves in the Russian spotlight. The Russian envoys at the Ottoman Porte and Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Frenkel wrote, inculcated the Imperial Government with thoughts about the extreme importance of Ottoman Armenians for the interests of Russian eastern politics, which could be realised if: 1) the dignity of "Catholicos of All Armenians" is conferred upon a person who is loyal to the interests of Russian government; and 2) this candidate will be able to subject Ottoman Armenians, in a spiritual sense, to himself. This approach, he continued, "gave rise to a whole series of concessions and indulgencies on the side of our government, which served as a precedent for future harassments of Armenian catholicoses for the creation, for themselves only and for their flock, of that exceptional position which was regulated by the law of 1836" [РГИА, ф.821, оп.7, д.96, ч.III, л.203об.-204].

After the adoption of this law, the rights of the Ganjasar metropolitan Baghdasar became significantly restricted. Although as before, as Raffi [1882, p.304; Раффи, 1991, с.159] wrote, he was considered the "Albanian" metropolitan and was independent in his spiritual power over his flock, after the establishment of the consistory of Shusha *uezd*'s (district) religious administration he was in direct subordination to Echmiadzin, which "often hindered the free activities of the metropolitan..." With the

death of Baghdasar on 27 June 1854 in Shusha, the history of the “Albanian” metropolitanate also ended [Raffi, 1882, pp.309-310; Раффи, 1991, с.162].

Thus, Russia’s projects for constructing an Albanian polity in the region in the early and late eighteenth century were not only abandoned, but also the Albanian Catholicosate and its flock were turned into trading objects for the realisation of the Russian policies *vis-a-vis* the Ottoman Empire and Persia. As noted by Barkhudariants [1907, II, p.168], the 1500-year-old Albanian Catholicosate, which had preserved its existence under “the Persians, Arabs, Khazars, Black Huns, insidious Greeks, Tartars, Chingiz Khan, Tamerlane, Ottomans and again Persians” was destroyed by the Russian government. The step-by-step deprivation of the independent Albanian Catholicosate of its dioceses and flock, and the eventual dissolution of this ancient ecclesiastical institution, which started with the annexation of the southern Caucasus by Russia in the early nineteenth century, gave rise to the process of the ideological, cultural and ethnic transformation of the Christian Albanians and the re-writing of the Albanian and Armenian histories to fit the new realities. Church schools, which came under the supervision of Echmiadzin, especially after the law of 1836, started indoctrinating Armenian identity into the former flock of the Albanian Catholicosate. The process was also facilitated by the transfer of its documents to Echmiadzin [Imranli-Lowe, 2015, pp.554-556].

Apart from numerous contradictions and/or demonstrations of lack of enough or accurate knowledge on past and contemporary histories of Albanians and Armenians, comparative analysis of available published and unpublished (archival) documentary and secondary sources on the subject reveals that data on Albania and Albanians underwent politically-motivated editorial revisions. The data contains retrospective essentialisation of ethnicity, and interpretations in the light of Armenian and Russian interests, where “Albania” turned into “Armenia” and all the related information was presented and interpreted as concerning Armenia and Armenians, with no mention of Albania [for example; compare the information on the subject: Храповицкий, 1862, II, с.37; Бутков, 1869, II, с.151; Дубровин, 1886, II, с.171; Иоаннисян, 1947, с.282-283]. Raffi had at his disposal in 1881 an unpublished manuscript booklet by the Albanian Catholicos (metropolitan from 1815 to 1828) Sergius about the

history of the Karabakh *meliks*. He did not understand why Sergius entitled this work *History of the Country of the Albanians*. Raffi also did not hide his surprise at Sergius not referring to the abovementioned *melik* Mejlum or *melik* Abov as Hayk or Aram, designations by which the Armenians referred to themselves in acknowledgment of their legendary ancestors [Raffi, 1882, pp.389-393; Раффи, 1991, с.198-199; Imranli-Lowe, 2015, p.555].

As was mentioned above, the major provider of information about the Armenians and Albanians for the Russian government in the late eighteenth century was Archbishop Argutinsky, the head of the Astrakhan diocese of Echmiadzin, who was appointed to this position by Echmiadzin Catholicos Simeon Erevantsi (1763-1780) in 1773. Erevantsi occupied a special place among the Armenian catholicoses in terms of putting a great deal of effort into the subordination and eventual dissolution of the Albanian Catholicosate. However, he was not successful in this aim beyond removing the Astrakhan diocese from the jurisdiction of the Albanian Catholicosate in 1768 [Эзов, 1901, с.5-10; Imranli-Lowe, 2015, pp.553, 555; Имранлы, [2005]2006, с.15-17]. Archbishop Argutinsky died on 9 March 1801, and his last words were a request to be buried next to Erevantsi in Echmiadzin [Дубровин, 1886, IV, с.224]. His mission as the major informant of the Russian government regarding the Armenians and Albanians was taken up by other Echmiadzin archbishops, namely Ioannes and Nerses, both of whom were the heads of the Georgian diocese of Echmiadzin, the latter becoming Echmiadzin Catholicos in 1843–1857.

Thus, the Russian political agenda *vis-a-vis* the southern Caucasus, Persia and Ottoman Empire brought about the dissolution of the Albanian Catholicosate which had been long sought after by the Armenian Echmiadzin Catholicosate, and almost caused the extermination of a whole identity. The Christian Albanians came to be called and eventually to identify themselves as Armenians, except for a small number of Udins who continue living in the Gabala and Oghuz districts of Azerbaijan, an area which used to be part of the Shaki khanate in the eighteenth-early nineteenth century, and the village of Zenobiani in Kakheti, Georgia.

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Lolua Roman

*Professor, Doctor of Philological Sciences, Researcher
at the Institute of Linguistics after Arn. Chikobava, TSU (Georgia)*

INFORMATION IN ANCIENT ARMENIAN SOURCES ON THE GENESIS OF THE CAUCASIAN-ALBANIAN SCRIPT

The main sources alleging the creation of the Caucasian-Albanian script by Mashtots are:

“The Life of Mashtots” by Koriun (an author of 5th century). His main manuscripts date back to the 17th–19th centuries; there are two manuscripts dated to the 14th and 14th–15th centuries [Корюн, 1962, с.155-156]). In these two early manuscripts of Koriun included in mnogoglavs (manuscript tomes), there is no information about the “creation” of the Caucasian-Albanian (as well as Georgian) script by Mashtots [Гаприндашвили, 2019]. In addition to the lengthy edition of Koriun, there is also a short one (the earliest manuscript dates back to the 12th century), the main difference of which in the context of our interest is that, according to this edition, Mashtots did not create, but only “renewed” or “updated” the alphabet of the Caucasian Albanians:

“...and then he went to Aghvank, renewed their alphabet, revived the learning traditions” [Gorioun, 1869];

“The History of Armenia” by Movses Khorenatsi (in Armenology, Movses Khorenatsi is often stated as an author of the 5th century, but a number of scholars believe that he lived in the 7th–9th centuries. The earliest manuscripts date back to the 14th century¹) [История Армении, 1893; Мовсес Хоренаци, 1990];

“The History of the Land of Aghvank” attributed to Movses Kaghankatvatsi (apparently, a compilation of the 7th–10th centuries. The main manuscripts date back to the 17th–19th centuries and only one manuscript to the 13th century (1289) [Мовсес Каланкатуаци, 1984].

The same information is found in later biographers of Mashtots – an anonymous author of the 9th century, who wrote the “The History of the Holy Patriarch Sahak and Vardapet Mashtots”,

and Karapet Saspetsi (12th–13th centuries), the author of “On the Life and Death of St.Vardapet Mesrop”, as well as in a number of early and late medieval sources, including a historian of the 9th–10th centuries, Hovhannes Draskhanakertsi, authors of the 12th–13th centuries, Kirakos Gandzaketsi, Vardan Araveltsi, Stepanos Orbelian, and some others.

Based on the information from Koriun, Khorenatsi and other later authors, the majority of Armenian specialists, as well as many foreign Armenologists repeatedly pointed out that the Caucasian-Albanian (and Georgian) alphabets were created in the early 5th century by Armenian educator Mesrop Mashtots.

Meanwhile, the authenticity of this information was doubted.

I.Javakhishvili analyzed the text of the Armenian written sources and came to the conclusion that in Koriun’s “Life of Mashtots”, there was no information about the creation of the Georgian and Albanian alphabets by Mashtots, and such information was added later. In particular, I. Javakhishvili noted that Armenian chronicler of the 5th century, a Mashtots’ disciple, Ghazar Parpetsi, uses the above work of Koriun, but knows nothing about Mashtots’ activities in Iveria or Caucasian Albania. Koriun’s both editions, according to the scientist, have not reached us in their original form, and, therefore, are of little use for elucidating the circumstances of the origin of alphabets in Transcaucasia. Many of Koriun’s reports, even those concerning Mashtots’ translation activities, seem to the scientist as a consequence of later interpolations and editor’s works composed or introduced for a certain reason [Джавахишвили, 1998, с.387-421].

K.A.Melik-Ogadzhanyan, disputing this point of view, notes that Parpetsi “in general says little about

¹ Apart from a small fragment dating back to the 10th–11th centuries, with no narrative about the creation of the Albanian (and Georgian) alphabet [Коланджян, 1958, с.182].

Mashtots and about his activity in creating writing. L.Parpetsi refers his reader to Koriun's work: "Should someone wish to confirm this, he may read the history of that desirable man Koriun, a student of the venerable Mashtoc' which provides information about [Mashtoc's] life, his Armenian letters, about when, where and by whom [the Armenian letters] were found, and about the enthusiastic entreaties of Armenia's king Vramshapuh. Koriun, the aforementioned spiritual man, wrote all of this down accurately. We have read [Koriun] numerous times, and so confirmed our information" [Ghazar P'arpec'i, 1985, c.12] [Мелик-Огаджанян, 1962, c.5].

This explanation does not seem adequate to us. Firstly, the respected researcher should have given the above quotation from Parpetsi in full – Ghazar is listing what he learned by repeatedly "reading" Koriun. Parpetsi perused from Koriun "about the history of his (Mashtots') life and his Armenian letters, and when, where and by whom they were found". Secondly, as shown in the scientific literature, Parpetsi borrows whole excerpts from Koriun's book. Thus, N.G.Adonts notes that "Ghazar Parpetsi made extensive use of Koriun's work but, apparently, in a different edition; it is not convincing that a historian, borrowing whole pages from Koriun, would change his style so much" [Адонц, 1908, c.341]. Accordingly, Parpetsi's story about Mashtots' life and work is by no means short. Three chapters of Parpetsi's work are dedicated to him. In two extensive chapters, Parpetsi sets out in detail the history of the emergence of the Armenian script, and talks about the "Daniel Letters", Mashtots' quest, the final formation of the Armenian script and the participation of Catholicos Sahak, King Vramshapukh and other people in this process. At the same time, he does not say a word about such an important "episode" in Mashtots's activity as the creation of the Caucasian-Albanian and Georgian alphabets!

Before I. Javakhishvili, N.G.Adonts notes that the surviving version of Koriun's work cannot be recognized as the original, since later it underwent editorial revision. N.G.Adonts dates the new edition of Koriun's work to early 7th century and attributes the authorship to Yeznak, whom some researchers consider the real author of Agafangel's work [Адонц, 1908, c.341-342].

Y.A.Manandyan agrees with N.G.Adonts in his assumption that Koriun's original work is not extant and adds that "One can really assure oneself of this if pays attention to those passages that were borrowed by Ghazar Parpetsi from Koriun. Ghazar, apparently, knew the work of Koriun in its ancient version" [Манандян, 1941, c.10].

Other researchers also note numerous ambiguities, omissions and inconsistencies in the sequence of the narrative, and even obvious contradictions in Koriun's text.

Doubts also arise about the second main source that talks about the "creation" of the Georgian and Albanian alphabets by Mashtots – "The History of Armenia" by Movses Khorenatsi. In particular, this is due to the comparison of Koriun's and Movses Khorenatsi's information about the creation of the Caucasian-Albanian writing, which reveals significant discrepancies:

According to Koriun, the meeting of Mashtots and Benjamin was in Byzantium, but Khorenatsi states that Mesrop and Benjamin met in Albania;

according to Koriun, the initiator of Albanian alphabet creation most likely was Benjamin, and according to Khorenatsi it was Mesrop;

according to Koriun, Albanian script was created in Byzantium, and according to Khorenatsi – in Albania. Moreover, according to Khorenatsi, Mesrop first visited Byzantine Armenia during the anarchy after the creation of Georgian and Albanian scripts, the death of Vramshapukh, the re-enthronement of Khosrov, and the departure of Shapur;

according to Koriun, Benjamin himself came to Mashtots, but according to Movses, it was Mesrop who called Benjamin, and Vasak, the ruler of Syunik, sent him, with the mediation of the bishop of Anania;

according to Koriun, Benjamin lived in Albania-Aghvank, and according to Khorenatsi – in Syunik gavar, which Armenian authors at that time unambiguously considered to be Armenian;

according to Koriun, Benjamin was a priest, and according to Khorenatsi – a translator;

according to Koriun, Mashtots created Albanian letters independently, only having questioned Benjamin, and according to Khorenatsi – with the assistance of Benjamin, king Arsvalen and patriarch Jeremiah;

according to Koriun, Mashtots created a script for the Albanian language, and according to Movses – for the Gargarean language;

according to Koriun, Mashtots left Iovnatan as an overseer over the inhabitants of Balasakan, and according to Khorenatsi – over the inhabitants of Aghvank. According to Koriun, he was a court priest who showed diligence in teaching; according to Khorenatsi, however, Iovnatan was a disciple of Mesrop;

according to Khorenatsi, Mesrop appointed court priests in Aghvank, and from Koriun's report it follows that Iovnatan was a priest at the court of Albanian kings before the arrival of Mashtots;

according to Koriun, Mashtots came to Aghvank from Armenia (Vagharshapat), and according to Khorenatsi – from Iveria;

according to Koriun, Mashtots during his trip to Albania (the only one, according to Koriun) visited Balasakan and Gardman, and according to Movses, Mesrop visited the same place during his second visit to Albania;

according to Koriun, after Albania, Mashtots left for Iveria, and according to Movses – for Armenia.

And above all: according to Koriun, the creation of Albanian writing took place during the reign of the son of Vramshapukh, Armenian king Artaxias (Mashtots leaves for Albania after the meeting with king Artaxias and Catholicos Sahak), and according to Khorenatsi – during the reign of Vramshapukh himself.

As we can see, a comparison of the two principal and earliest sources describing the creation of Albanian writing by Mashtots shows the existence of serious contradictions between them. This discrepancy is all the more surprising if we take into account the fact that both authors are recognized by the majority of Armenologists as Mashtots' disciples who wrote in the 5th century. Even if Movses Khorenatsi is viewed as a later author, it is difficult to assume that he used Koriun's information.

Clarifying the significant differences between the works of Koriun, Ghazar Parpetsi and Movses Khorenatsi, P.M.Muradyan suggests that Parpetsi and Khorenatsi did not use the well-known work of Koriun, but the non-extant "Complete History of

St.Sahak and Mesrop" mentioned by a writer of the 10th century Aaron Vanandetsi. In addition, there is an ancient Georgian translation from Armenian, which is a work (a manuscript of the late 10th or early 11th century) combining excerpts from the History of Khorenatsi and Parpetsi (published by I.Abuladze), titled "The death of Nerses the Great's son, St.Sahak the Parthian, who was the sixth generation of the family of St.Gregory". According to the author, it was the Armenian original of this Georgian translation that was the common source for Khorenatsi and Parpetsi [Мурадян, 2005, с.164-165].

This assumption raises doubts (let's just recall that Parpetsi himself refers to Koriun's work as his source in describing the life and work of Mashtots, and not any other), although it does not explain, but on the contrary, confirms the fact of a significant revision of the original edition of Koriun's work.

In our opinion, the story about the creation of the Albanian alphabet in the "The History of the Land of Aghvank" is also not authentic.

As is known, focused literature provides various assumptions with regard to the time of writing of this work, its authors or compilers and their number. Despite this, we know about the origin of the author (compiler) of all the three books or the co-author who wrote books I and II of this work (who lived and described events up to the 7th century), that he was from the village of Kaghankatuik of Utic gavar (province) and was a patriot of his country, as evidenced by the numerous laudatory epithets he used in relation to his country, people, its kings, and prominent figures, for example:

Glorious and desirable is the country of Aghvank with the highest ridges of the Caucasus Mountains, [full of] all kind of riches. The great Kura smoothly and majestically carries [its waters] ...The capital [of the country] is the great [city of] Partaw (Book I, Ch. V).

In this context, the pejorative characteristic of the Gargarean language, given in the story about Mesrop's creation of the alphabet for the Gargareans (Book II, Chapter 3), looks bewildering, considering the fact that the author himself believes the Gargareans to be one of the Albanian tribes:¹ "Guttural, voiceless, discordant, rough". The report

¹ "From his [Aran's – the eponym of Albanians] son, the tribes of the Uti, Gardman, Tsavdey, Gargarean principalities originated" (Movses Kaghankatvatsi. I, 4).

of creation of the Gargarean alphabet in the “History of the Land of Aghvank” is no longer repeated, but in two places it talks about the creation of the alphabet of “Aluan letters” by Mashtots. Therefore, Gargarean and Albanian (Aluan) in this context are synonymous.

In our opinion, this information is interpolated from the “History of Armenia” by Movses Khorenatsi: “Mesrop ...created the script of the Gargarean language, a language rich in guttural sounds, incoherent, barbaric, extremely awkward” [История Армении, 1893, с.193]:

The story of the creation of the alphabet for the Gargareans in “The History of the Land of Aghvank” (Book II, Chapter 3) is placed after the description of the events related to the uprising led by Vardan Mamikonian (Book II, Chapter 2 – borrowed from Elishe); It is significant that in this chapter the ruler of Syunik, Vasak, is referred to as “valiant”, while in the previous chapter (Book II, Chapter 2) the author gives him the following epithets for betraying the rebels: “damned”, “apostate”, “wicked”.

In addition, in the title of Chapter III of Book II (“The arrival of vardapet Mesrop to the king of Aghvank Esvalen, creation of letters, re-establishment of schools, strengthening of faith in Aghvank and eradication of other beliefs”), the phrase “secondary establishment of schools” is worthy of attention. In our opinion, the “primary” opening of schools in Aghvank is understood by the interpolator as the opening of schools for “children of sorcerers, wizards, priests, finger-cutters, poisoners” by Vachagan the Pious, described in the first book of the “History”, although, according to the “History of Aghvans” itself, Vachagan the Pious reigned after the kings Esvalen and Vache. The interpolator seems to have missed this detail, which resulted in this lapse.

It should be noted that the supporters of the “Armenian” version of the origin of the Albanian and Georgian alphabets believed the main argument for the authenticity of the information of ancient Armenian sources to be the fact that this information was about real historical figures of that time. Thus, K.A.Melik-Ogadzhanyan notes that “the years designating this or that stage in the history of the creation of writing of the three friendly Transcaucasian peoples can be moved a few years back, towards the 4th century, or forward, to the 5th century, **but one thing is clear: these letters**

and scripts were created at the turn of the 4th and 5th centuries, during the time of the Armenian king Vramshapukh, Catholicos Sahak, the Iberian kings - Bakur, and then the enthroned Ardzyukh and the bishop of the country Movses, prince of Tashir Ashushi, Aghvank king Arsvakh and bishop of the country Jeremiah ...There can be no doubt about it” [Мелик-Огаджанян, 1962, с.5].

But is it true? It should be noted that there are but sketchy details about King Arsvak (Arsvak, Esvak) and Bishop Jeremiah (Jeremiah), found only in Armenian-language sources, and the names of other people mentioned in the context of the creation of Albanian script (Beniamin/Benjamin, etc.), do not occur without this context at all. The scarce information available about King Arsvak does not give grounds to question the time of his reign (although it does not confirm it, either), however, in the case of Bishop Jeremiah, there is, in our deep-rooted conviction, an anachronism.

In the list of Albanian Catholicos in the “History of the Land of Aghvank”, Jeremiah occurs between Iovhan (John) and Abas. He occupies the same place in the lists of Mkhitar Gosh, Kirakos Gandzaketsi (referred to as Iovanes) and Mkhitar of Ayrivank (as Ter-Ogan) [Мхитар Гош, 1960; Киракос Гандзакети, 1976; Хронографическая история, 1869].

The period of Catholicos Abas’ offices is known more or less precisely. The “History of Aghvans” defines its duration as 44 years, and the beginning of his ministry was the first year of the Armenian calendar (552) (Book I, Chapter 4, Book III, Chapter 24). In his “Book of Letters” in the epistles, Armenian Catholicos Hovhannes II (557–574) determines the time of Abas’ ministry as the Catholicos as 552–596, that is, 44 years as well [Книга писем, 1901, с.81]. Mkhitar Gosh also dates the beginning of Abas’ patriarchate to the first year of the Armenian era, although he reduces the years of his office to 23 [Мхитар Гош, 1960, с.9].

The years of office of Jeremiah’s predecessor, John, who, according to Movses Kaghankatvatsi (Book III, Ch.24) and Kirakos Gandzaketsi [Киракос Гандзакети, 1976, с.134], also became the Bishop of the Huns, are not determined. Despite this, we can state that his activity as the Catholicos of Aghvank took place in the first half of the 6th century. The reports of Armenian sources about John are surprisingly aligned with those

of an anonymous Syrian chronicle of the 6th century, titled by Pseudo-Zacharias of Mytilene (Zacharias Rhetor), about Kardost, “the bishop of the land of Aran”, who christianized the Huns, “issued there a scripture in the Hunnic language” and became a bishop for 14 or, as the source says, “two weeks of years” [Пигулевская, 1939, с.115]. N.V. Pigulevskaya dates Kardost’s departure to the Huns to 537 [Пигулевская, 1939, с.113]. According to M.I. Artamonov, however, “Kardost arrived in the country of the Huns not before 515 and left it in 529” [Артамонов, 1962, с.93].

We have no doubt that the Armenian sources and the Syrian chronicle refer to one and the same person. The difference between the names “John” and “Kardost”, in our opinion, is not significant, because according to Pseudo-Zacharias of Mytilene, “this Kardost, which translates to Theokletos in Greek and “summoned by God” in Aramaic [Пигулевская, 1939, с.115]; Kardost is rather a nickname given to Bishop John by the Huns, than a proper name.

Therefore, based on the reports of Movses Kaghankatvatsi, Mkhitar Gosh, Kirakos Gandzaketsi, and Mkhitar of Ayrivank, in 552, Jeremiah was followed by Abas on the throne of Catholicos of Aghvank. Jeremiah, in his turn, was preceded by St. John, who officiated in the first half of the 6th century. He went to the Huns, as it seems, being already the patriarch of Aghvank,¹ and, apparently, Jeremiah’s enthronement as the Patriarch coincided in time with the departure of John (Kardost) to the Huns, since it is difficult to imagine that the bishop’s throne of Aghvank was remaining without a locum tenens for 14 years.

So, according to the reports of Armenian sources, after the end of the reign of King Esvalen (Arsval/Arsvalen) and before the beginning of the ministry of patriarch Jeremiah (Eremiah), there is about one century gap, i.e., they could not be contemporaries.

Moreover, in all appearances, Kirakos Gandzaketsi used a source compiled during the Abas patriarchate when compiling a list of the heads of the Albanian Church. Gandzaketsi gives the dates of the rule of church heads and each subsequent head in his list rules one year longer than the previous one, and the term of rule corresponds to the

ordinal number ... Obviously, Gandzaketsi borrowed these dates from some unknown source, possibly Albanian, and adopted ordinal (alphabetic) numbers for the patriarchate period of the church heads. This ordinal system is interrupted by Catholicos Abas, which suggests that Gandzaketsi used the list made during the rule of Abas. It is impossible that the author of the list of Albanian patriarchs did not know the name of the previous ruler during the time of Catholicos Abas.

When did the information about the creation of the Albanian letters by Mashtots appear? According to I. Javakhishvili, the information about the creation of Albanian and Georgian letters was added to the text of Koriun in the late 6th century [Джавахишвили, 1926, с.403-411].

Z. Aleksidze, after a critical examination of the information in the “Book of Letters”, moved the time of the appearance of information about the “creation” of Georgian and Albanian letters to the early 8th century, and then, on the basis of a comparison of the third epistle of Armenian Catholicos Abraham, given by Ukhtanes, with the relevant text of the “Book of Letters”, he showed that the report of the alleged creation of Georgian writing by Mashtots was interpolated into the “Book of Letters” not before the 10th century [Книга эпистол, 1968, с.035, 042; Ухтанес, 1975, с.293-303].

According to B. Khurtsilava, the information about the “creation” of the Georgian alphabet by Mashtots appeared in the 13th century and is associated with the “activities” of Hovhannes Vanakan and his disciples, representatives of the so-called Khoranashat school: Vardan Araveltsi, Kirakos Gandzaketsi, Mkhitar of Ayrivank, etc. After the demolition of the Khoranashat monastery in 1225, the representatives of this school moved to various educational centers, both in Armenia and abroad, and some of Vanakan’s disciples founded new schools. This, according to the author, led to the spread of the legend about the creation of the Georgian letters by Mashtots (the author admits the creation of the Albanian alphabet by Mashtots) [Хурцилава, 2003, с.109-110].

The latter assumption is dismissed by the existence of a brief manuscript edition of Koriun

¹ This is evidenced by Pseudo-Zacharias of Mytilene: “An angel appeared to a man named Kardost, the bishop of the land of Aran” [Пигулевская, 1939, с.115].

(the so-called Pseudo-Koriun) of the 12th century, in which there is already a statement about the “creation” of Georgian and the “renewal” of Albanian writing by Mashtots.

A critical study of Armenian sources talking about the alleged creation of the Caucasian-Albanian (and Georgian) writing by Mashtots has brought us to the following conclusions:

The information about the “creation” of the Caucasian-Albanian and Georgian alphabets by Mashtots was authored by either Movses Khorenatsi or the person who revised the “History of Armenia” and introduced details that an author of the 5th century could not have known about.¹

The terminus post quem of the appearance of such information is the beginning of the 7th century, the time of the Georgian-Armenian church break, and the terminus ante quem is the end of the 9th century. The most probable time seems to be the 9th century.

From the “History of Armenia” by Movses Khorenatsi, this message moves to other authors: “The History of the Holy Patriarch Sahak and Vardapet Mashtots” (9th century), Hovhannes Draskhanakerttsi (9th-19th centuries), “History

of the Land of Aghvank” (10th century),² Kirakos Gandzaketsi, Vardan Araveltsi, Stepanos Orbelian (12th–13th centuries), and some others. The same can be said about the data from the short edition of Koriun.

All the above authors mention Koriun as one of the sources, although the story of the “creation” of the Caucasian-Albanian and Georgian alphabets by Mashtots is obviously borrowed from Movses Khorenatsi, which is easy to see if we compare the travel routes of Mashtots during the alleged creation of these alphabets by Koriun, Movses, and the aforementioned authors. All the reports are brief, made according to one template following the narration of Movses Khorenatsi and the report of the second book of “The History of the Land of Aghvank” repeats almost word for word what Movses said.

In our opinion, the use of Khorenatsi’s work as a source for describing the ups and downs of the “creation” of the Albanian and Georgian alphabets by medieval Armenian authors can only testify to the fact that Koriun’s “Life of Mashtots” did not yet contain this information. This is confirmed by the fact that in the earliest manuscripts of the lengthy

¹ As noted by R.Hovhannisyan, “The History of Armenia” is the most complete and at the same time the most controversial work in the early Armenian historiography. The researcher points out the following contradictions in Khorenatsi’s work:

Movses writes that the fall of the Arsacid monarchy followed the death of Mesrop (who died in 440) and patriarch Sahak (who died in 439), although the fall took place earlier, in 428.

Khorenatsi writes about people and places known only in the 6th–7th centuries and refers to sources that were not available in the 5th century. He misrepresents the sources in order to praise his patrons – the Bagratunis who rose in the 8th century.

Khorenatsi is not referred to in sources earlier than the 10th century [Hovannisian, 1997].

R.Thomson, the author of the English translation of Khorenatsi’s “History”, points to the following anachronisms in Khorenatsi’s work, which do not allow dating this work to the 5th century: Movses was the first Armenian writer who identified Syunik with Sisakan. The latter term was first encountered in a Syrian source of the 6th century. In Armenian Geography of the 7th century, it denotes a district, not an entire province.

Khorenatsi mentions four Armenias. These Byzantine provinces were created in 536 by Byzantine emperor Justinian I (527–565).

He refers to the territory east of Lake Van as Vaspurakan. This term came into use after the partition of Armenia in 591.

Movses mentions the Khazars. In other Armenian sources, the Khazars were first reported in the “Armenian Geography” of the 7th century.

He is aware of the Iranians’ advance to Bithynia. The Iranians reached this far west during the war of 604–629 only.

Khorenatsi mentions the positions in Byzantine Armenia, which were established only after the victory of Emperor Heraclius I over the Persians in 629.

Moreover, Robert Thomson gives Movses Khorenatsi the epithet of a politically biased hoaxer serving his patron, manipulating sources and falsifying the history of Armenia [Thomson, 1978].

To the above arguments we can add that in his work, Khorenatsi uses the second form of Mashtots’ name, Mesrop, which is not typical for Armenian sources of the early period. This form came into use by authors in the 7th century only. As noted by Y.A.Manandyan, “the controversial and dubious name Mesrop first occurs in later writings, in the Life of St.Nerses (Venice, 1853, p.83 and 110) and “The History” of Movses Khorenatsi” [Манандян, 1941, с.10]

² In the second book of the work. The narrative about Mashtots in the first book of the “History of the Land of Aghvank” has an earlier origin, with the exception of the interpolated segment in the first phrase of this story.

edition of Koriun (14th–15th centuries) which in Armenology is traditionally regarded as an authentic work of Koriun, there is no information about the creation of the Caucasian-Albanian and Georgian alphabets by Mashtots.

From the work of Movses Khorenatsi, this information first gets into the short Koriun edition and then, quite late (most likely, in the 17th century), into the lengthy edition. Moreover, the information of Koriun's short edition, borrowed from Khorenatsi's work, contradicts the information of the lengthy edition. These contradictions, in our opinion, are due to the interpolator's desire to exalt Mashtots even more in the lengthy edition of Koriun and to embellish his actions. Comparing the data from the lengthy edition of Koriun and Khorenatsi, we can see that the information of Koriun is even more unbelievable. Thus, according to Khorenatsi's reports, the alleged creation of the Caucasian-Albanian and Georgian alphabets was contributed to by rulers, high priests and translators of the respective countries, i.e. according to Khorenatsi, the alphabets were "created" through the activity of a certain council of people, while according to the lengthy edition of Koriun, Mashtots "created" these alphabets single-handedly, being outside these countries, moreover, without knowing either Albanian or Georgian languages. According to Koriun, Mashtots single-handedly "created" Albanian letters, only by asking Beniamin, and he created the Georgian alphabet without anyone's help (in any case, not a single word is said about this).

Armenian historical literature tends to overstate the merits of Mashtots. The following picture appears: Mashtots is a missionary, preacher of Christianity; Mashtots is the reformer of the Armenian alphabet, and Mashtots is the creator of all three Caucasian alphabets. In the Book of Letters (5th–13th centuries) Mashtots is repeatedly mentioned as a preacher of Christianity, but never as the creator of the Armenian alphabet [Книга писем, 1901]. He appears similarly in the first book of the "History of the Land of Aghvank" (Chapter 27), where the story is only told about the religious activities of Mashtots and his disciples in Albania. There is not a scintilla of any educational activity: spreading writing, opening schools, teaching children, translation, etc. Among the later authors,

Thomas Artsruni (9th–10th centuries) can be placed to this group.

The second group includes the authors who considered Mashtots but a reformer of the Armenian alphabet, who added certain letters to it, as well as, together with patriarch Sahak, a propagator of the Armenian writing and a translator. These include Philo of Tirak and David Kharkatsi (both of the 7th century). A number of later authors, ascribe to Mashtots the creation of the Albanian and Georgian alphabets, in addition to inventing certain letters of the Armenian alphabet (Asohik (10th–11th centuries), Vardan Araveltsi (13th century) and some others).

Ghazar Parpetsi (5th century) puts more emphasis on the contributions of Catholicos Sahak to the creation of the Armenian alphabet (Chapter 10). Considering that the main source of Ghazar was Koriun, this message should have been in the original text of Koriun. If we trace over time, we can see how the role of Mashtots increased and the contributions of people (bishop Daniel, Sahak, Ropanos, etc.) who participated in creating the Armenian writing diminished.

The oldest lectionaries and hymnographic collections refer to Mashtots, together with patriarch Sahak, mainly as a translator of the Holy Scriptures, while the liturgical collections of the subsequent period (for example, "Hours") consider Mashtots a reformer of the Armenian writing, who added letters for vowels to the Armenian alphabet. Later, the authors of the Synaxaria saw Mashtots as the creator of the three Caucasian alphabets, in addition to being the translator of the Holy Scriptures and a preacher.

It is therefore possible to conclude that the only reliable piece of information of Armenian sources is that the Caucasian-Albanian writing really existed (this played a fundamental role in starting the search for the missing monuments of the Albanian writing) and the information about the "creation" of the Caucasian-Albanian alphabet by Mashtots appeared later, most likely, between the early 7th and the late 9th centuries in the work of Movses Khorenatsi and then got to the pages of other manuscripts.

This assumption is also supported by the fact that there is no information about the creation of the Albanian and Georgian letters in foreign-language, non-Armenian sources. Yeznik Kakhbetsi,

Yeghishe (Elishe), Sebeos, Anania Shirakatsi, David the Grammarian and other authors of the 5th–7th centuries do not mention the “invention” of the Georgian and Albanian alphabets by Mashtots. As noted, the main sources talking about the “creation” of the Albanian alphabet by Mashtots (Koriun, Khorenatsi, “The History of the Land of Aghvank”) have contradictions, anachronisms and other inaccuracies. It is the cases of Varietas lectioni of the main sources, particularly when comparing the information of Koriun and Ghazar Parpetsi, or the “Book of Letters” and Ukhtanes, as well as the contradictory reports of Mkhitar of Ayrivank that give grounds to assume a rough editorial revision of the sources, that gave rise to the information of creation of Albanian and Georgian scripts by Mashtots.

Are other details of the Armenian authors about the origin of the Albanian script reliable? Answering such questions as “did the Albanian writing emerge in the early 5th century”, “was Beniamin (Benjamin) a real person and was he the creator of the Albanian writing”, “does the statement of Movses Khorenatsi mean that writing emerged among the Gargareans”, “was the Albanian writing created under King Esvagen (Arshal, Arshalen)” is rather difficult. Perhaps, the Armenian sources really reflect some actual vicissitudes of the creation of the Albanian alphabet, which were later supplemented with legendary or biased content, although any assumptions on this matter may forever remain hypotheses.

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Malikov Rauf

*Head of the Editorial Board "World History, History of Azerbaijan and Archaeology"
of the Research Center of "Azerbaijan National Encyclopedia", PhD in History*

ALBANIAN TEMPLE OF THE MOON GODDESS

The question of the ancient temple of the moon goddess and the temple area on the territory of Albania has been addressed by many historians. However, their studies published back in Soviet times in monographs and scattered articles are often difficult to access for many modern historians. Considering these aspects, the author of this article tried to summarize the results of research by previous historians about the Albanian temple of the moon goddess and the temple area.

According to I.Chopin who was one of the first to try to locate the Temple of the Moon, the sanctuary "was located in the vicinity of Iberia, at the confluence of the Iori and the Alazani rivers" [Шопен, 1866, с.363].

T.Mommsen, describing the Roman campaign against Albania, tried to locate the temple area of the moon goddess (Anahita-Selene), which, in his opinion, was in the upper reaches of the Euphrates [Моммзен, 1887, с.106].

According to A.Y.Krymsky, the sanctuary of Selene was located on the territory of present-day Shaki [Крымский, 1938, с.371].

H.A.Manandian believed that the temple of Anahita was located in the region of Akhaltsikhe and Akhalkalaki [Манандян, 1939, с.73-74; Манандян, 1943, с.187-210]. He also tried to establish the social status of the hierodules [Манандян, 1945, с.7, сл.].

One of the valuable works on the culture of Albania can rightfully be considered K.V.Trever's Essays on the History and Culture of Caucasian Albania (4th century BC–7th century AD) [Тревер, 1959]. The monograph covers the cultural life of the country during this period. The author paid significant attention to the study of the Albanian temple of Selene (the Moon). However, the lack of information from written sources, as well as insufficient study of the material culture of this period, prevented the author from investigating the cult of the moon goddess and the temple economy in full. Nevertheless, K.V.Trever's monograph contains

valuable insights and suggestions about the temple of Selene and the temple area.

According to I.S.Javadov, K.V.Trever mistakenly locates Pompey's winter camp on the Kura, near the city of Gazakh. Sharing H.A.Manandian's point of view, I.S.Javadov places it near the city of Akhaltsikhe, on the right bank of the Kura [Джавадов, 1960, с.707-709].

In the "Temple Economy" section of the monograph "Ancient Albania in the 3rd–1st centuries BC" by Z.I.Yampolsky, on the basis of a wealth of ethnographic materials, an attempt is made to uncover the issue of slave labor use in the temple economy [Ямпольский, 1962]. The author tried to shed light on one of the most complex and controversial issues of Albania of that period, i.e. its social system.

In his book "Caucasian Albania", K.H.Aliyev describes temple lands and focuses on certain aspects of the religious ideas of the ancient Albanians. He believes that there were two temple areas in Albania: one near Iberia and the other on the banks of the Kura where Pompey pitched for winter quarters with the Roman legions [Алиев, 1974, с.310-311]. K.H.Aliyev associates the terracotta figurines discovered in archaeological excavations with the Parthian idols mentioned by Tacitus. The author emphasizes the trinity of the pantheons of the Persians and the Albanians, for Zeus, Helios and Selene "are revered by both the Persians and the Albanians" [Алиев, 1974, с.334]. Comparing the religion of the Persians and the Albanians, K.H.Aliyev concludes that the Medes, Persians and Albanians worshipped the same pantheon. In his opinion, if the main deities of the Persians, Medes and Albanians did not differ from each other, then, probably, "there was no significant difference in other features of the religions of these peoples". Proceeding with the analogy, the author comes to the conclusion that the Albanian deities "Helios, Zeus and Selene, named by Strabo in Greek, may fully or partially be identified

as Mithra, Ahura Mazda and Anahita". [Алиев, 1974, с.337, 352, 353].

We should note a fundamental paper by Y.R.Jafarov, dedicated to locating the temple area of goddess Selene. The author believes that the area of Anahita, mentioned by Dio Cassius, should be identified with the sanctuary of the Moon and this area was located on the right bank of the Kura in the Khalkhal region near Gazakh [Джафаров, 1985, с.97-108].

J.A.Khalilov shares interesting ideas about the remnants of the ancestor worship embodied in stone statues and that "before the adoption of Christianity, these statues were one of the main items of religious veneration among the Albanians". The author touches upon the problem of temples and large temple economies in which temple slaves or hierodules worked [Халилов, 1985, с.188, 192-193].

According to G.A.Koshelenko, the formations that "emerged in the Transcaucasus were societies of the "peripheral type", that is, they were on the border separating the old civilizations of the Near East from the vast world where primitive communal relations still prevailed." In Hellenistic times, contacts with the West intensified, and later the influence of Parthia increased. It is reflected in the types of clothing, horse caparison, weapons, and finally in religion. In syncretic religious beliefs, "the cults of ancient local deities merged with the cults of functionally similar Iranian deities, of which Mithra and Anahita played a special role". Therefore, syncretic forms of culture spread widely among the local population [Кошеленко, 1985, с.114].

K.H.Aliyev's *"Antique Caucasian Albania"* also reflects the aspects of the spiritual culture of antique Azerbaijan. One of the author's main conclusions about the religious views of the Albanians is that there is an analogy between the "deities of the Persians, Medes-Atropatenes and Albanians", which is quite convincing [Алиев, 1992, с.157, 161]. K.H.Aliyev asserts that "the same deities named by Greek theonyms testify to the fact that the Persians, Medes and Albanians had a similar pantheon, although in each case preference was given to one certain deity. Albanian deities Helios, Zeus and Selene may fully or partially be identified as the deities Mithra, Ahura Mazda and Anahita" [Алиев, 1992, с.164].

K.H.Aliyev and F.K.Aliyeva's *"Azerbaijan in Antiquity"* considers the information about various

religious views of the local population and Albanian temples [Əliyev, Əliyeva, 1997, с.50-54].

The monograph by F.K.Aliyeva *"The Culture of antique Azerbaijan: Media Atropatena and Caucasian Albania"* also provides information about the temple of goddess Selene and her temple area. She objects to the opinion of Y.R.Jafarov who identifies the Moon Temple near the borders of Iberia with Anahita Temple on the banks of the Kura [Алиева, 2007, с.76].

As a preamble to the analysis of information about the Albanian Temple of the Moon, it should be noted that the archaeological research in Dashkasan, Shamkir, Nakhchivan and Shaki revealed crescent moon and sun shaped tombstones, rings with images of the goddess of the moon and stars, dating back to the 3rd millennium BC, as well as other materials related to astral cults [Гёюшев, 1984, с.29; Ахундов, 2001, с.89-99]. They testify to the existence of the Moon cult on the territory of Azerbaijan as early as the 3rd millennium BC. These cults were mainly associated with the personification of dying and reviving nature (rising and setting of the Sun and the Moon, changing of the Moon phases from new moon to full moon, etc.).

We find the first written information about the religious views of the Albanian population in Strabo's Geography (1st century BC–1st century AD). The ancient geographer writes: "They worship such gods as Helium, Zeus and Selene, especially Selene..." (Strabo XI, IV, 7). Therefore, according to Strabo, the Albanians worship three main deities, giving preference to Selene (Strabo XI, IV, 7). One of them is Helios, the sun god, the second, according to Strabo, is the supreme god Zeus, and the third deity, as previously noted, is called Selene [Алиев, 1992, с.152]. Interestingly, some of the ceramics and other items buried with the dead were ornamented with the crescent moon, which confirms the existence of the cult of the Moon goddess [Алиев, 1974, с.330; Алиев, 1992, с.153].

K.V.Trever draws a parallel between the Albanian Helios, Zeus and Selene and the Armenian Mihr, Aramazd and Anahita [Тревер, 1959, с.151]. Referring to the religious features of the Armenians neighboring with the Albanians, she emphasizes that each of the three Armenian deities separately had its own prototype in the pantheon of Iran [Тревер, 1959, с.151]. Strabo writes that "the cult of Anahitis is held in special esteem among the Armenians,

who have erected shrines in honor of this goddess in different places, including Akilisene. Here they dedicate slaves to serve the goddess” (Strabo XI, XIV, 16).

The Greek geographer calls the Albanian deities by the names of the Greek gods, i.e. talks about the deity of the Sun, about the supreme god of Heaven and about the goddess of the Moon. In the Armenian pantheon, too, these same three deities were the ones most revered. Anahita, as is known, was revered by all the peoples of Western and Central Asia as a deity of the earth, water, vegetation, fauna, and female fertility. In Asia Minor, in Cappadocia and Pontus, there were temple areas described by Strabo, dedicated to the deity of the Moon (Selene, Men) (Strabo XII, II, 3; XII, III, 32). It should be noted that the construction of temples in honor of Anahita was widely practiced by the population of Iran and neighboring countries [Алиев, 1974, с.335]. Iranian influence can also be traced in the territory of ancient Georgia [Гагошидзе, 1980, с.20-21]. In the architecture and construction of Armenia and Albania, forms brought from Iranian, in particular Parthian architecture and local folk tradition, were coexisting. Strabo tells about one of the temples dedicated to Anahita. Thus, the Persians “gave the rock the shape of a hill, then built a wall and erected a sanctuary to Anahita and the gods who have a common altar with her, i.e. the Persian deities Oman and Anadat, establishing an annual sacred festival of Sakas...” (Strabo XI, VIII, 4). Strabo writes that “wherever there is a sanctuary of this goddess, there, according to custom, the feast of the Sakas is celebrated, which is something like a Bacchic festival where men dressed in Scythian clothes drink and flirt obscenely with each other and with women feasting with them” (Strabo XI, VIII, 5).

The ancient author calls the same deities existing in different countries, e.g. the deities of Persians [Дандамаев, Луконин, 1980, с.312, сл.], Medes [Дьяконов, 1956, с.373, сл.; Алиев, 1960, с.306, сл. (and later – Atropatenes), Armenians [Тревер, 1959, с.151; Периханян, 1959, с.79, сл.], and Albanians [Алиев, 1974, с.331, 334, сл.; Алиев, 1992, с.157] by the names of the Greek gods not only according to the primary concepts and ideas of the ancient world, but also because “Persian customs are the same among these peoples, among the Medes and among many other tribes...” (Strabo XV, III, 13).

Most ancient experts believe that to describe Albania and Iberia, Strabo used the notes of the participants in Pompey’s campaign, especially the unpreserved work of Theophanes of Mytilene who accompanied Pompey on the Transcaucasian campaign and gave a detailed description thereof [Neumann, 1883; Fabricius, 1888; Aly, 1957, с.87-101; Ельницкий, 1961, с.150]. Strabo also makes a reference to Delliis who participated in the Parthian campaign of Antonius. (Strabo XI, XIII, 3).

The same deities called by Greek theonyms testify that Persians and Medes, Armenians and Albanians had similar pantheons, although in each case preference was given to one deity, for example, Selene-Anahita, as was the case in ancient Albania. Albanian deities Helios, Zeus and Selene may fully or partially be identified as the Zoroastrian deities Mithra, Ahura Mazda and Anahita [Алиев, 1974, с.353; Алиев, 1992, с.164]. The analogies between the religious specifics of Parthian-era Iran and ancient Albania lead to the conclusion that both of them had a cult of Zeus personifying the sky, the solar deity Helios known as Mithra in Iran, and Selene identified with Anahita, the goddess of fertility associated with water and other natural phenomena [Алиев, 1974, с.352, 356].

Strabo points out that the sanctuary of Selene “is near Iberia” (Strabo XI, IV, 7). According to Plutarch (1st–2nd centuries), Pompey “had to go against Mithridates through (the lands of) the tribes living (around) the Caucasus. The greatest among them, Albanians and Iberians... (Albanians) first agreed to provide passage (through their country) to the requesting (it) Pompey. But when winter overtook the army of (Pompey) in (their) country, Plutarch continues, and the Romans had the feast of Cronius, (Albanians) (in the number of) at least 40 thousand attacked them, having crossed the Kirn river [Kura. – R.M.]» (Plut., Pomp., 34). Pompey killed many Albanians and put them to flight. Then Pompey, having made peace at the request of the Albanian king, moved against the Iberians.

These events are described by Dio Cassius (2nd–3rd centuries) in the same sequence, but in more detail. Thus, he specifies the place of the winter quarters of the Romans: “And he [Pompey. – R.M.] spent the winter in the region of Anahitis and near the Kirn (Kura) river, dividing (his) army into three (parts)” (Cass. Dio, XXXVI, 53, 5). However, the Romans could not spend the winter in peace,

Dio Cassius continues, “for Oroeses, the king of the Albanians living above the Kirn (Kura), on the one hand, wishing to please his friend Tigran the Junior, and on the other hand, being most of all afraid that the Romans invade Albania”, attacked them just before the holiday of Saturnalia, hoping to catch the Romans by surprise. However, the Albanians were defeated by the larger and more disciplined Roman legions. The Romans killed many Albanians while crossing the Kura. After this, Pompey, at the earnest request of the Albanians, concluded an armistice” (Cass. Dio, XXXVI, 54, 1-5). In the same work, talking about the return of Pompey to Pontus after a campaign in Iberia and Albania in 65 BC, Dio Cassius notes that this year the Roman army wintered in the same area: “Pompey also spent winter in Aspis” (Cass. Dio, XXXVII, 7, 5).

According to T.Momzen, the area of Anahita was located on the upper Euphrates [Момзен, 1887, с.106]. A.Y.Krymsky believed that this sanctuary was located on the territory of present-day Shaki [Крымский, 1938, с.371].

H.A.Manandian believes that Pompey’s route to the Kura, described in the Tabula Peutingeriana, must have run towards the northwestern borders of ancient Armenia, from Artashat through the present-day Ashtarak and Ganlija to Khospia (= Caspiae) located south of Akhalkalaki. It is here, in the opinion of H.A.Manandian, north-west of Khospia-Caspiae, on the right bank of the Kura, between the present-day cities of Akhaltsikhe and Akhalkalaki, in ancient Gogarene, that the winter quarters of the Roman legions must have been in 66/65 and 65/64 BC [Манандян, 1939, с.74-75; Манандян, 1943, с.199, сл.].

The Albanian temple of the Moon is located by A.I.Boltunova in the most economically developed region of Albania, adjacent to Iberia (in the east of Kakheti) [Болтунова, 1956, с.441].

G.A.Melikishvili did not agree with the point of view of H.A.Manandian. He did not find convincing the assertion that the Anahitis mentioned by Dio Cassius was a different region not same as Akilisene. In addition, according to G.A.Melikishvili, there are no sufficient grounds for identifying Dio’s Aspis with the Caspiae of Peutinger Tables. As he believes, from Dio Cassius’ statement follows that in this case “Aspis” means the same Akilisene. As a result, G.A.Melikishvili joins the opinion of T.Mommsen who considered the territory between the upper

reaches of the Euphrates and the sources of the Kura as the Romans’ wintering place [Меликишвили, 1959, с.325-326].

Analyzing the same reports, K.V.Trever considers both points of view of T.Mommsen and G.A.Melikishvili and H.A.Manandian unconvincing. In her opinion, Pompey intended to overtake Mithridates in Colchis, but given the fact that on the way to Colchis the Roman army risked being attacked by the Iberians (who allowed their friendly Pontic king to pass through their lands), decided to attack Iberia from Albania, from where he was least expected. Through a roundabout route to Colchis, but the shortest to Albania, was the well-known trade route from Artashat to the north, through the present-day Dilijan gorge to the banks of the Kura. It was, apparently, this way, K.V.Trever believes, that Pompey chose. In view of this, in her opinion, H.A.Manandian’s identification of the Anahit (Anahitis) region off the Kura banks with the temple land in the Ἀσπις (Caspiae–Khospia) region in the area between Akhaltsikhe and Akhalkalaki is not valid, as Pompey undoubtedly went from Artashat to the north, and not to the west, reaching the Kura in the area of the present-day Gazakh city [Тревер, 1959, с.92-93]. In the same work, K.V.Trever locates the temple of Anahita in “Gogarene adjacent to Iberia and Albania” [Тревер, 1959, с.93, 150-151].

N.Y.Lomouri assumed that the said sanctuary was located on the site of a Christian temple near Telavi [Ломоури, 1960, с.190-191].

According to I.S.Javadov, K.V.Trever mistakenly locates the winter camp of Pompey in 66–65 BC on the Kura, near the city of Gazakh. Sharing the point of view of H.A.Manandian and trying to clarify the location of the Roman camps, I.S.Javadov places them near the city of Akhaltsikhe, on the right bank of the Kura, near the station point of Peutinger Tables [Джавадов, 1960, с.707-709].

On the one hand, T.Mommsen’s point of view supported by G.A.Melikishvili does not take into account the direct contradictions between the clear indications of sources on the cause and effect of the events of the winter of 66–65 BC and the distance to their suggested venue. Firstly, as H.A.Manandian rightly noted, it is completely improbable that Pompey, who intended to resume the pursuit of Mithridates in the spring and had the opportunity to lead his army to Colchis, would return for the winter from Artashat on the Aras to the Upper

Euphrates region. In addition, the assumption of wintering both in Anahitis-Akilisene and near the Kura, in places located at a distance of more than 400 km from each other, is extremely controversial [Манандян, 1939, с.73]. Secondly, as K.V.Trever convincingly showed, Pompey went from the capital of Armenia to the north, towards the Kura, and not to the west, towards the Euphrates [Тревер, 1959, с.93]. Thirdly, it is absolutely impossible to imagine a situation in which a forty thousand Albanian army led by king Oroeses could covertly and in such a short time (moreover, in winter) be simultaneously in the Anahit region in Akilisene and near the Kura and attack the Roman camps in order to forestall a potential invasion of Romans to Albania located in at least 300 km from the sources of the Kura and three times farther from Akilisene on the Euphrates. These points confound the assumption of the location of Roman camps in the winter of 66/65 BC in the area between the Kura and the Euphrates [Джафаров, 1985, с.101].

On the other hand, H.A.Manandian and I.S.Javadov's point of view also raises objections. First, as noted by G.A.Melikishvili, it was hardly safe to winter in 66–65 BC in a northern mountainous area bordering the unconquered territories of Colchis and Iberia [Меликишвили, 1959, с.326].

Secondly, as K.V.Trever pointed out, Pompey's task was to protect his rear, first from the Albanians, then from the Iberians. Therefore, the "Region of Anahit" could not be located near Khospia (Caspiae of the Tables), since this region nowhere borders Albania [Тревер, 1959, с.93].

Thirdly, if the Romans wintered in the area between Akhaltsikhe and Akhalkalaki, they must have clashed with Iberians, not with Albanians, on the Kura, which contradicts the data of Plutarch and Dio Cassius [Джафаров, 1985, с.101].

Fourthly, in the winter of 66 BC, the Albanian army led by Oroeses had no need to overcome the huge difficult path upstream of the Kura in order to, in the days of Saturnalia, find themselves on a foreign land, in Gogaren, right in front of Pompey's camps, scattered from Akhaltsikhe to Akhalkalaki, and attack the Romans. There was a shorter way leading from Albania to this area, moreover, it ran directly to the rear of the Romans, without a dangerous crossing of the Kura, namely through the present-day Bolnisi, Trialeti, Bogdanovka or Borjomi, Bakuriani along the right bank of the Kura to the Akhalkalaki–Akhaltsikhe

region. In addition, it is unbelievable that the Albanians with their 40,000 army in about 300 km of the borders of Albania would risk attacking the Roman legions led by Pompey, amounting, according to T.Mommsen and H.A.Manandian, to more than 50 thousand people [Момзен, 1887, с.104; Манандян, 1943, с.174].

Fifthly, it is not clear why the researchers do not take into account Plutarch's remark which is very important for locating the temple of the Moon. Immediately after the announcement that the Albanians first agreed to allow Pompey to pass through their country, Plutarch notes that when "winter overtook (Pompey's) army in (their) country, the Albanians, numbering at least 40,000, attacked the Romans, crossing the Kura" (Plut., Pomp., 34). This note of Plutarch largely determines the further development of events and explains the main reason for the contradictions that arise in the interpretation of sources. This note makes us understand that, on the one hand, winter overtook the army of Pompey in the Albanian land (Plutarch), and not worlds away from it. That is why the Albanians first allegedly agreed to let Pompey pass through their country, and then, led by their king Oroeses, suddenly attacked the Roman camps, fearing the invasion of the Romans into Albania (Plutarch, Dio Cassius). On the other hand, the "region of Anahitis" near the Kura, where the Roman winter camps were located (Dio Cassius), was also in "their country" (Plutarch) [Джафаров, 1985, с.103].

Based on K.V.Trever's location of the winter camp of the Roman legions in 66–65 BC on the right bank of the Kura, near the city of Gazakh, all the reports of Plutarch and Dio Cassius about the route of Pompey's Caucasian campaign in 66–65 BC line up in a clear sequential chain of events [Тревер, 1959, с.96-107].

It should be noted that, according to Dio Cassius, the Roman army wintered in the same place twice, i.e., as follows from the above, in the area of Gazakh. In the first case, this place is associated with the "region of Anahit", i.e. Anahitis, and in the second case with Aspis [Джафаров, 1985, с.104]. As is known, Anahit, the goddess of earth, water, fire and fertility, was revered by almost all the peoples of Western and Central Asia [Wikander, 1946, с.67; Тревер, 1959, с.151; Дандамаев, Луконин, 1980, с.313, сл.]. In Armenia, there was a temple area dedicated to Anahit and located in Akilisene, on

the Upper Euphrates [Периханян, 1959, с.8]. It was already mentioned above that H.A. Manandian, relying on Dio Cassius's report about Aspis, locates another region of Anahit in Gogaren, near Caspiae (Khospia), between Akhaltsikhe and Akhalkalaki, which contradicts the data of Plutarch and Dio Cassius [Джафаров, 1985, с.104]. K.V.Trever, for her part, believes that in this case it is about some kind of temple land located either in the area of ancient Khalkhal or in the eastern part of Gogarena adjacent to Albania and Iberia [Тревер, 1959, с.93]. However, if Pompey's army, on the one hand, wintered in the "region of Anahitis and near the Kura" (Dio Cassius), i.e., according to K.V.Trever's assumption, in the region of Gazakh, then the region of Anahit, i.e. Anahitis (and also Aspida) must have been in the same area. This is all the more likely that, except for Dio, the region of Anahit near the Kura is not mentioned by any source [Тревер, 1959, с.93, 151]. On the other hand, the ancient city of Khalkhal, near which, according to K.V. Trever, there was a certain temple land, was located just near Gazakh [Hübschmann, 1904, с.272; Тревер, 1959, с.264, сл.] and according to S.T.Yeremyan, in the lower reaches of the Aghstafa river [Еремян, 1939, с.85]. This city was referred to as the winter residence of the Albanian kings [Ерише, 1971, с.77]. So, if we assume that the "Anahit Region" – Ἀναήτις (and, therefore, Ἀσπίς) of Dio Cassius was located on the right bank of the Kura, in the area of ancient Khalkhal (near Gazakh), then the question arises of what exactly should be understood by Ἀσπίς.

Based on Strabo's report, researchers locate the Albanian Moon temple region at the confluence of the Iori and Alazani rivers [Шопен, 1866, с. 363], or in the the present-day Shaki [Крымский, 1938, с.371], or in the historical region of Shaki (covering the modern territories of the Shaki, Gakh, Zaqatala and Balakan districts of the Republic of Azerbaijan), but mainly on the middle reaches of the Alazani River, in Eastern Kakheti [Джафаров, 1985, с.105].

According to K.H.Aliyev, there were two sanctuaries in Albania: one was the Anahit sanctuary on the right bank of the Kura between the Aghstafachay and Tovuzchay rivers, the other was the sanctuary of the Moon (Selene) not far from Iberia [Алиев, 1974, с.311, 313]. However, the deity of the Moon in Albania, apparently, was identical to the cult of goddess Anahit, according to the researchers [Тревер, 1959, с.151, сл.; Алиев, 1974,

с.353, 356], who did not draw the proper conclusion from their important observation. Therefore, it can be assumed that the "region of Anahitis" (and Aspis) near the Kura mentioned by Dio Cassius and the temple area with the sanctuary of the Moon near Iberia mentioned by Strabo refer to one and the same place [Джафаров, 1985, с.106]. This is all the more likely that Strabo, who, like Dio Cassius, took information from Theophanes of Mytilene, speaks of only one temple area in Albania, and not two. Otherwise, Strabo would certainly have mentioned another sacred area (as, for example, in Pontus), since he did not only use Theophanes' work, but other sources as well. "The region of Anahit" – Anahitis (aka Aspis) of Dio Cassius was apparently located on the right bank of the Kura, in the area of ancient Khalkhal (near Gazakh) [Джафаров, 1985, с.106]. Khalkhal was located in the Gardman region, the province of Uti (Armenian Utic, Greek Otene), near the borders of Iberia [Ерише, 1971, с.77].

In summary, according to Y.R.Jafarov, in 66–65 and 65–64 BC, Roman legions of Pompey twice wintered on the territory of the Albanian temple area dedicated to the main deity of Albania – the Moon (Anahit), on the right bank of the Kura, in the region of Gazakh [Джафаров, 1985, с.107]. He also tries to identify this temple with the remains of a large religious building and column bases dating by the 5th–6th centuries BC, which were discovered over a *pir* (sanctuary) of the Bronze Age as a result of excavations on the Sarytepe hill located on the western outskirts of Gazakh [Халилов, 1960, с. 68–75; Нариманов, 1960, с.207–210].

Temple areas dedicated to the deity of the Moon (referred to by Strabo as Σελήνη – Selene or Μήν – Men) were in Cappadocia (Comana), Pontus (Comana, Zela, Ameria) and Phrygia (Strabo XII, II, 3; XII, III, 31–32.). According to Strabo, the temple area (ἱερὰ χώρα – sacred land) in Albania with the temple (τό ἱερόν – sacred place) of the Moon, located near the borders of Iberia, was also dedicated to the same deity of the Moon. The ancient temple was not only a cult center, but also an administrative, legal and military one. At the head of the temple area was a priest (ἱερεὺς – priest), who had the full power. Among quite a few such temple areas in Asia Minor, the most famous was the temple in Comana, Cappadocia. Temple areas also existed in Armenia; Anahitakan (the area of the goddess Anahita) in Akilisene, on the upper Euphrates, stood out among

them. Strabo confines himself to stating that the temple area in Albania was located not far from Iberia (Strabo XI, IV, 7.), apparently in one of the fertile, well-irrigated and mountain-enclosed valleys in the territory of Kakheti.

Further Strabo writes: "...the priest [in the temple] is a man (ἱερεὺς) most respected after the king (Basileus): [he] stands at the head of the temple area (ἱερὰ χώρα – sacred land), vast and well-populated, and [at the head] of the hierodules, of which many are possessed by God and preach" (Strabo XI, IV, 7.).

From Strabo's description of the temple areas in Asia Minor, we learn that in Comana of Cappadocia where there was a Moon sanctuary, the majority of the population consists of "god-bearers" (theophoros) and hierodules (Strabo XII, II, 3), i.e. there were two groups of people, like in Albania, where the priest heads both the vast and densely populated temple area and the hierodules. The population of Comana is said to be subordinate to the king "in a different way": the majority obey the priest; the lord of the sanctuary is the same for the hierodules (men and women, totaling 6,000), the temple owns rich cultivated land and the income from it belongs to the priest who ranks second after the king (Strabo XII, II, 3). Speaking about Pharnacia, Strabo mentions the Temple of the Moon (Mene), then the trading town of Ameria, "with a large number of hierodules in the temple land" and adds that there is a "sanctuary of Selene, like in Albania and Phrygia" (Strabo XII, III, 31).

Therefore, if we assume that in Albania the sanctuary of Selene-Anahita and the priestly area belonging to it were organized according to the model of Asia Minor, the following picture would emerge: in the fertile part of western Albania, perhaps in the region of Khalkhal (Lala), there was a sacred or priestly area with a temple of the goddess, especially revered in Albania; the lands belonging to the temple were cultivated by men and women, and all income from the land and, possibly, crafts were to the benefit of the temple; the revenues were controlled by the priest, to whom the hierodules were subordinate and who ranked second in the country after the king. The information of the ancient author reveals the social status of the high priest of the temple of Selene: the ἱερεὺς (priest) was the most respected person after the king and the head of the temple aristocracy. As for the population of

the temple territory, it can be seen from the above quote that the priest was the master not only of the Albanian hieron dedicated to Selene, but of the entire temple territory [Алиев, 1992, с.194].

Besides the hierodules, there were also "god-bearers" in the priestly land, about whom Strabo, describing the Albanian temple area, says that they are "obsessed by God" and "prophecy" [Тревер, 1959, с.136]. With regard to the last word, K.V.Trever suggests that at the temple of Selene in Albania, there was an oracle where these "god-bearers" gave answers to the questioners. The fact is that in Asia Minor there were oracles at the temples in the priestly regions, and the same is known about the corresponding temples in Armenia [Тревер, 1953, с.105-112].

A great deal of literature work has been devoted to hierodules, with some researchers seeing them as temple servants, others as "sacred slaves", still others as enslaved peasants, and so on.

Y.A.Manandyan believes that temple estates were divided into separate plots, which, on certain conditions, were provided to hierodules. Hierodules, in his opinion, were not temple slaves, but "temple people" who could not be sold and who, when confiscating temple lands, became "king's people" [Манандян, 1945, с.7, сл.]. Assuming that temples could have slaves, Y.A.Manandyan, nevertheless, does not see slave temple farms in temple lands, but at the same time he proceeds from a position which it is difficult to agree with, namely, that temple people were "dependent serfs", that communal peasant already in the 2nd–1st centuries BC was enslaved as a result of the strengthening of the landowning nobility [Манандян, 1945, с.22].

It should be added that A.I.Boltunova considers the hierodules "not slaves in the literal sense of the word, but people who lived on the temple territory and were obliged to pay quitrent to the priest" [Болтунова, 1947, с.157].

The researchers who studied this question relied only (or mainly) on Strabo's data, and therefore, there is no clear answer to this question. Additional data were necessary, first of all, epigraphic data, i.e. texts of inscriptions that would have been found on temple lands and had a connection with social and economic life in these territories, as well as other documentary data. A.G.Perikhanyan used epigraphic data and expanded the list of primary sources, which allowed her, when considering the

hierodules in Asia Minor, to come to the conclusion that the hierodules, i.e. temple slaves, were the communal property of temple communities and as such could not be alienated, that the direct producers were to a large extent the community members of dependent villages (temple peasants), and that the population of temple associations was socially heterogeneous [Периханян, 1959]. However, when considering the matter of temple lands and hierodules of Transcaucasia, we should take into account the specific situation, time and place of employment of the hierodules, since it is unlikely that the forms of economic life on the temple lands have not changed over the centuries. A temple community of 4th–3rd centuries BC is supposed to be of a slightly different character as the same community in the same Asia Minor at the end of the 1st century BC, when it could be observed by Strabo in Comana. Economic organization of the priestly area in Albania could have specific features [Тревер, 1959, с.138].

K.V.Trever, proceeding from the idea of the social structure of Albania, believes that if Strabo is talking about the past, maybe about the 3rd century BC, the temple area was a territorial community united by the cult of a certain deity and headed by a priest. We do not know the local Albanian term for the members of this community, these temple slaves or community members. We don't know whether this Albanian temple community near the borders of Iberia was the only one in Albania, or it was one of many other temple lands united around the temples of other deities. We also don't know whether the second part of Strabo's story about ritualistic killing for lustration should be attributed to the time of Strabo, i.e. to the beginning of the Common Era, or whether to see in it a story about an ancient custom, the remnants of which could be preserved in the life of the Albanian temple community. Strabo writes that "the one who is most obsessed by the deity and wanders in the woods on his own, is seized by the priest, who binds him with a sacred chain and feeds him in abundance throughout the year" (Strabo XI, IV, 7). It is difficult to answer the question who these "God-obsessed" or "God-bearers" were; they were also present among the population of Comana of Cappadocia, in which Strabo distinguishes – this is, obviously, the group of the population that Strabo refers to in the chapter on Albania and about which it is said that all three words denote being in a state

of God obsession, religious ecstasy [Тревер, 1959, с.138-139].

A. Krymsky suggests to see these "obsessed" people as holy fools and madmen, whom the local population handed over to the temple [Крымский, 1938, с.370]. According to K.V.Trever, it is very likely that these were a kind of "god's people", hysteriacs who lived on the territory of the temple at the expense of the community [Тревер, 1959, с.139].

Strabo continues his story: "Then he (the hierodule) is brought for sacrificing to the deity, anointed, and slain along with other sacrifices". The word means "sacrificial animals" (mainly sheep), so it should be translated "with other sacrificial animals" [Тревер, 1959, с.139]. Strabo further writes: "The ritual of sacrifice is as follows: someone with a sacred spear, which, according to custom, is used to stab people, comes out of the crowd and strikes him from the side in the heart, being experienced in this matter. From the way the dead body falls, some signs are noted and announced publicly" (Strabo XI, IV, 7).

The scrupulousness in the description of the details of this theatrical-like event, which would be prepared for more than a year and where the main role would be played by the sacrificed hierodules, is surprising. The material accessories of the cult were mainly the sacred alusis chain and lance spear. It would all begin with putting the sacred chain on the divinely inspired hierodule wandering around the sacred place. The culmination of the spectacle would be a rare, even for that time, human sacrifice, intended for the audience. Judging by the description, the sacred spear dedicated to human sacrifice would be struck in the heart. The spectacle would end with prophesy being made upon the fall of the mortally wounded hierodule [Алиев, 1992, с.153].

The ancient, time-honored custom is evidenced by the spear referred to as sacred and, according to the custom or law, serving for ritual killing. The statement that the person who carried out killing was experienced in it could mean that the sacrifice was performed by a dedicated member of the priestly community. The last words of Strabo explain the meaning of this sacrifice: "When the body is brought to a certain place, all those in need of lustration step over it" (Strabo XI, IV, 7). So, the body is brought to a certain room located at the temple, and here those who "need" lustration step over the body [Тревер, 1959, с.140]. According to the belief that exists in Azerbaijan to this day, it is prohibited to step over a

lying person, because thereby ailments and diseases are transferred to him. Apparently, the inhabitants of the sacred land stepped over the hierodule's dead body to cleanup themselves, i.e. free themselves from ailments and diseases.

As already noted, according to Strabo, some hierodules prophesied. K.V.Trever believes that at the Albanian temple there was an oracle, where worshippers could ask questions to the deity; answers to them were given by the god-obsessed who were also interpreters of various signs associated with prophesying. Such oracles were at many temples in Asia Minor; such a room existed at the Armenian temple in Armavir [Тревер, 1953, с.104, сл.] and on the territory of the Albanian province of Uti, in the city of Anariaka [Тревер, 1959, с.140], where, according to Strabo, prophecy was carried by sleeping oracles (Strabo XI, VII. 1).

Returning to the social meaning of the hierodules, it should be noted that a slave could not be an interpreter of the oracle, a prophesier at the temple, and if they were the feeble-minded, hysteriacs, and holy fools from the community, who were supported by income from the temple land, then they could hardly be slaves.

Therefore, Strabo's text about the Albanian temple land and about the hierodules can confirm the point of view of those who see these temple slaves or "God's" slaves as members of the community, and not as slaves as a social category [Тревер, 1959, с.140-141].

The temple land in Albania could differ from similar priestly areas in Asia Minor in some specific features, perhaps in ritual killing in order to purge the members of the community, on which Strabo focused his attention. Unfortunately, there is no data that would allow comparing the Albanian temple community with those in Armenia and Iberia. Neither do we know whether the Albanian high priest performed both legal and military functions, as was the case in Iberia [Адонц, 1908, с.409].

The Moon (Selene) cult in various forms continued to exist in subsequent times. In course of ethnographic research in the Quba and Qabala regions, ancient gravestones were found with the image of the Moon, the Sun and the tree of life, characteristic of the pre-Islamic ideology of Azerbaijanis.

Elements of the astral cults characteristic of the Albanians have survived to this day in the beliefs of the population of Azerbaijan and Eastern Georgia. There are still traditions of ritual manufacture of crescent-shaped amulets for children. There is a tradition of wearing amulets and beads to turn away the evil eye among adults as well. Since ancient times, each time the new moon appeared in the sky, people stretched out their hands to heavens praying the moon for longevity. This tradition, preserved in many regions of Azerbaijan, has merged with Islamic ideology and seeing the new moon, the elderly invoked salawat according to Islamic canons.

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Mobili Robert

*Chairman of the Albanian-Udi Christian Community of Azerbaijan,
Senior Research Fellow at the Department of Mineralogy,
Crystallography and Geochemistry of the Baku State University*

UDINS AND ALBANIAN CHURCH IN MULTICULTURAL ENVIRONMENT OF AZERBAIJAN

Since Azerbaijan restored its independence, favorable conditions have been created for the further strengthening of interfaith relations, promotion of national and spiritual values, and further development of the historically-formed environment of tolerance, inter-ethnic and inter-religious dialogue. Therefore, today Azerbaijan has become a center of the cross-cultural space, confessional discourse, and inter-religious dialogue.

Part of the united multi-ethnic people of Azerbaijan, which includes both the titular ethnic group and more than 20 indigenous national minorities, are the Udi people, i.e. Albanian-Udi Christian Community, the origin and history of which has been of great interest to scientists for more than two centuries [Мамедова, 2005; Джавадов, Гусейнов, 1999; Алексеев, Майсак, Ганенков, Ландер, 2008; Гусейнов, 2008; Данакари, 2013].

The Udi, an autochthonous people of Azerbaijan, are one of the most ancient Caucasian indigenous ethnic groups and are among the ancestors of the modern Azerbaijani people. The history of the Udi ethnic group, who have repeatedly suffered from political, religious and sectarian conflicts and rivalries between the major powers or stronger neighbors, is worthy of great respect and sympathy.

The Udi are a unique ethnic group and, unlike all other ethnic groups of the world, they are a phenomenon that has managed to survive, despite all the vicissitudes, cataclysms, and historical adversity, even being deprived of their own Church. They were mentioned in ancient sources as participants in the Battle of Gaugamela between Alexander the Great and the Persians (331 BC), in the writings of Herodotus, Strabo, Ptolemy, Pliny the Elder, Arab sources, and in diaries of European travelers. The most detailed information about the Udi is contained in the "History of the Albanians" written by the local author Movses Kaghankatvatsi, a village located in

the Albanian province of Utik [Мамедова, 2005; Мобили, 2008а, с.26-29; Mobili, 2008b; Мобили 2013, с.234-236].

Alexandre Dumas, who met G. Bezhanov, Udi by ethnicity, during his journey to the Caucasus in 1859, wrote in his travel notes: "The origin of the Udi is unknown; their language, that nobody understands, is not similar to any other language. They lose themselves in the darkness surrounding them" [Дюма, 1985, с.122-123].

Based on archives and recent studies, it is worthy of note that the Udi were mentioned in writings of French scientist Edward Duralier, in diaries of English travelers, in Arutinov's anthropological studies, as well as in the description of the ancient Caucasian Albania by A. Yanovsky. Noteworthy is the discovery of a palimpsest in the Sinai in 1996.

Details on the Udi population going back to the last quarter of the 19th century suggest that there were 10-12 thousand of them in the Russian Empire [Раффи, 2009; Бежанов, 1892, с.213-262; РГИА: ф.796 (1836), ф.821 (1810, 1897–1910, 1914–1915), ф.735 (1859); Флоренский, 1992]. Until the beginning of the 12th century, close-knit Udi communities lived in several villages of Azerbaijan.

Today, the total Udi population is more than 10 thousand people, most of which (about 5 thousand people) live in Azerbaijan. They live compactly in the village of Nij and in a dispersed manner reside in Oguz and Baku. The Udi also live in the southern regions of Russia, Kazakhstan, Georgia, Ukraine, and the Republic of Belarus. Several families have been found in the south of France, England, Italy, Latvia, and the USA. In Azerbaijan, tight Udi communities are only found in Nij, where their population is half of 7,500 inhabitants of the village. The Udi have outlived several great empires they had formed part of, such as the Sasanian Empire, the Islamic Caliphate, the Ottoman Empire, the Russian Empire,



Iftar in the courtyard of an Udi church



At the harvest festival, late October 2019 In the courtyard of the Church of St. Elishe



The village of Nij. The Church of St. Elishe ("Chotari")



The Albanian cross

the USSR, and have managed to preserve their language, religion, and culture.

The Udi, being the direct descendants of Caucasian Albania, have survived as an ethnicity and have preserved, in addition to the language, culture, and traditions, their Christian faith, despite all the historical cataclysms, due to the multicultural environment in which they still live [Гүсейнов, 2008, с.22-25; Джавадов, Гүсейнов, 1999; Мобили, 2008а, с.26-29; Мобили, №2, 2009, с.214-219].

The Udi language (self-name: udi, udi muz) is part of the large group of Nakh-Daghestanian (Caucasian-Iberian) languages and has two dialects that are not as distinctive as to hinder the mutual understanding of their speakers. Currently, the Udi language is spoken by a little more than 10 thousand people, although in the past it was one of the most widespread languages of Caucasian Albania and formed the basis for the development of the literary language in the 4th century and the creation of the Albanian script. From a historical point of view, the commonly spoken Caucasian-Albanian language is closest to Udi, or rather to Proto-Udi language. The Albanian alphabet, created in the 4th century, emerged as a non-semiotic branch of the Aramaic graphic basis, consisting of 52 letters. In the time following, this alphabet became widely used. The most important biblical texts, liturgy, chants were translated into Albanian, and, most importantly, church services were held in that language. However, subsequently, the Albanian writing ceased to be used and gradually disappeared due to historical reasons. For a long time, scientists could not read the inscriptions on artifacts found during archaeological excavations. What helped them shed some light on this puzzle was a text (palimpsest) found in the Sinai in 1996 in the convent of St.Catherine. It was a liturgical collection that included liturgical basis and passages from the New Testament. This discovery put an end to the questioning the existence of the Albanian alphabet and the well-developed literary language. Up to now, these texts have been completely transcribed, read and published in two volumes [Gippert, Schulze, Aleksidze, Mahe, 2008] and translated into nine languages, including Udi. World-class Caucasian linguists Z.N.Aleksidze, J.Gippert, V.Schultz and Zh-P.Mache participated in this meticulous work. The key to deciphering these texts was the Udi language fluently spoken by the authors of the translation. The palimpsest, being the Christian heritage of Caucasian Albania, is a compilation containing fragments of the Gospel of John, a liturgy and a lectionary (a collection of liturgical reads). These texts and the related scientific research underlay the assumption that the Albanian alphabet was created in the 4th century [Алексеев, Майсак, Ганенков, Ландер, 2008; Ворошил Гукасян, 1974; Мобили, 2009, с.214-219; Мобили, 2010; Мобили, 2011].

Today, the Udi follow Eastern Christianity and, under current conditions, they are specifically focused on the revival of the Albanian-Udi Christian ethno-cultural heritage and their Church, abolished by the tsarist autocracy in 1836 with the support of the Armenian Gregorian Church.

As a result, ancient chronicles and antique books had been destroyed, tremendous values had been lost, and the two-thousand-year-old cultural and religious ordination experience had been disrupted. In a word, a huge layer of the spiritual culture of Azerbaijan has been lost forever, including the Udi culture, ancient and medieval historical and literary monuments, the traditions of prayer and liturgy, the memory of centuries and the set of values. The Udi, deprived of their own Church, despite all the official protests, had to bear all the rigours and hardships, even to the extent of refusing to become parishioners of their Church. However, the Udi have managed to preserve their native language and religious roots to this day. Today, more than 100 monuments of the Albanian confessional heritage are located in the territories liberated from the occupation by the Armenian armed forces. Their fate has no parallel in the history of Christianity.

The Udi, being the direct descendants of the ancient Caucasian Albanians, are among the ancestors of the Azerbaijani people, as well as bearers of elements and symbols of the Albanian Christian heritage. They are proud of their ancient culture, their centuries-old traditions, spiritual wealth, language and ethnography, and further enrich them in Azerbaijan, their historical homeland [Гүсейнов, 2008, с.22-25; Джавадов, Гүсейнов, 1999; Мобили, 2008а, с.26-29].

Inter-religious spiritual relationships that have existed for centuries in the history of Azerbaijan pave the way for the development of the ethnic diversity of this region. The multi-faith population of Azerbaijan is an example and symbol of religious harmony in the history of peoples of various faiths. Muslims, Jews, Orthodox Christians, Catholics and representatives of non-traditional confessions have lived here together in harmony and without any confrontation. Instead, they have been and are complementing each other. The very existence of their sacred sites, such as ancient temples of various confessions, synagogues, churches and mosques, next to each other symbolizes the common past of Our Country.

A striking example is the places of compact residence of the Udi in Nij: there are ancient sacred places of worship, three churches and two mosques in such a small space. There are two Christian communities and one Udi cultural and educational center here. The phenomenon of religious tolerance has always been present in our historical environment, and a small oasis of tolerance within the Udi community, first of all, confirms the existence of diversity.

Against the background of the apparent dominance of the Muslim religion in Our Country, the ideals of respect for religious rituals, holidays and mutual visits are promoted today. Today, Udi Christians still celebrate the sacrifice as a ritual holiday. That is, the spread of Islam created favorable conditions for the Udi through strengthening the existence of religious tolerance, especially in the context of the Udi community [Мобили, 2008; Мобили, 2012, с.165-172].

Hospitality is one of the traditions that have survived among the residents of the village of Nij. Since ancient times, the Udi have gladly welcomed both followers of their own religion and representatives of other faiths. Along with Christianity, the community has also managed



Solemn opening and consecration of the Church of St. Elishe ("Chotari"), 2006



View of the ethnographic open-air museum. Nij, 2021



At the celebration of the Day of Udi Culture (national youth dance) July 20, 2019



On May 15, 2021, President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev, First Vice-President Mehriban Aliyeva and their daughter Leyla Aliyeva visited the Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

to preserve folk customs, ceremonies, beliefs and holidays. Organization and holding of the celebration of Novruz Holiday is a very important factor promoting the religious tolerance in our community. This ancient spring festival that goes back centuries serves as a factor of cooperation and integration between Muslims and Christians.

From this point of view, it can be noted that there is no document that could confirm the fact of any inter-religious conflict. Historically, religious tolerance and respect between the communities have developed and existed from the outset.

The historical experience shows that the Azerbaijanis have always been tolerant of other religions and, perhaps, Azerbaijan is the only country in the European environment where there were no religious wars. Such friendly co-existence can be observed in education, daily life, language and beliefs. An example of this is the joint worship of common sacred places, indicative of the core connections incorporated in our genes. All these values make us to believe that in the model of tolerance, a thin line of good and evil runs between peoples, ethnic groups, religions, as well as through the dialogue and our hearts.

We feel strong governmental support, in particular, by Mr. President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev (who visited Nij in 2005 and 2011), the State Committee for Religious Affairs, various ministries, NGOs, and ordinary citizens of Azerbaijan.

In the name of restoring historical justice and realities, the Albanian Udi Church of St. Elishe "Chotari" was renovated in 2006 [Мобили, 2013, c.234-236].

In mid-August 2018, "Udi ocağı" (Udi Hearth) Historical Ethnographic Park and Museum was founded in Nij. Local and Polish specialists assisted in the establishment of this facility, and Azerbaijani architect-artist Shahveled Mammadov was among them. Azerbaijani word "ocaq" means "bonfire", "hearth", and also "sacred place", originally associated with fire. Such places are revered by both Udi and Azerbaijani, who decorate the location with ribbons and bring sacrificial lambs there. Despite the fact that this pagan tradition diverges from church canons and Muslim customs, there are a lot of such sanctuaries, and this rich historical experience is embedded in the genes of each Udi. The park's display includes the house of the Gangalov family built at the end of the 17th century and a household plot with a pond, garden, household outbuildings, and a fire. In this region, houses were often built with a mansard floor. In the summer, locals grew silkworm cocoons and dried tobacco leaves in the dark ventilated roof space, and held holidays in the fall. A specific feature of Udi houses, also common for houses of Azerbaijanis and Lezgins, is the prayer room. The main horticultural crop in their gardens is hazel. Today, the village's economy is mainly based on cultivation of hazelnut. In Nij, everyone has its own plantation. On the display, there are many pottery objects because Christian Udi, unlike their Muslim neighbours, were engaged in wine-making and aged wine in clay vessels. In the estate's courtyard, there is equipment used by the Udi to make dogwood or cherry-plum vodka. Today, nobody dries tobacco under the roof, and only tourists are shown the process of alcohol home-brewing. Guests can stay in



View of the Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary after the restoration



*Albanian Dadivank/Khudavank monastery complex (Kalbajar)
Visit by the Udi after the liberation from the occupation*

houses located right in the park-museum's territory. Forums, conferences, and round tables are also held there.

Nij is called an example of multiculturalism, a policy implemented at the state level in Azerbaijan. Its objective is to create conditions for the co-existence and co-development of different cultures within the Country. When the Udi celebrate Easter or Christmas, Protestants, Jews, Orthodox Christians and Muslims sit all together at the same table. In the village, two mosques are functioning, and two of three churches have been restored. Of the five schools, three are Russian and two are Azerbaijani.

In 2012, due to the efforts of the Heydar Aliyev Foundation, upper secondary school No.2 has been renovated in Nij, where Udi pupils are taught in Russian but learn their native language till the fifth grade.

The primary mission of the Albanian-Udi Christian Community is to study and raise awareness of its history. In the age of globalization and integration, the problem of preservation of the original culture is faced not only by small groups of population, and the case of Udi is an example for its solution. The Udi have never lived in isolation and yet have managed not to blend into other larger ethnic groups. Up to date, the Udi have preserved their traditions, faith and language, that allowed them to pass on the knowledge and spiritual values of their ethnicity from generation to generation.

As part of the "Azerbaijan – a space of tolerance" program, the Heydar Aliyev Foundation launched a project for the restoration and renovation of the Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the courtyard around it in Nij, which has been completed by November, despite the COVID-19 pandemic. In Soviet times, the church was used as a warehouse and was slowly breaking down. Its dome collapsed, grass and trees grew on the roof, and the walls began to crumble. Now, the new conical dome is surmounted by the Albanian cross, which differs from the crosses of other churches. There are three sharp petals at each of its four ends: the central one symbolizes the flame tip, and those at the extreme edges denote the moon sickles (crescents). These patterns are relics of the pagan cults of the peoples of Caucasian Albania, who worshiped the Moon and fire. Workers found vase-like hollow clay indentations in the walls and

vaults, which served as resonators to improve the hall acoustics. In 2006, they were removed during the restoration of the first of the three churches in Nij, but in this church they were left in their original places. Also, font basins were restored in the churchyard, where three springs shoot up from the ground. In the old days, the sacraments of baptism were held at the point where the springs merged together. The restored church was passed over to the Albanian-Udi Christian Community of Azerbaijan.

Today Azerbaijan is an example of tolerance and cooperation among representatives of different confessions and cultures. The Udi are represented by the Community Leader at the Supreme Religious Advisory Council, at the UNESCO session, as well as at various international conferences, forums, and meetings.

In conclusion, it should be noted that, despite the difference between religions and confessions, the role of the Udi in the formation of the state of Caucasian Albania and in the preservation of the rich Eastern Christian heritage, ethnic language, culture, customs and traditions is indisputable.

Today, the Udi Church is an integral part of the Albanian Apostolic Autocephalous Church. The Udi have played an important role in the consolidation of the Azerbaijani's ethnogenesis, so the Udi and the Azerbaijanis have centuries-old genetic connection. During the last decade, the Udi ethnic group has been experiencing another peak of renaissance characterized by a surge in their national identity and ethnic consolidation. A striking example and an oasis of this phenomenon, as a model of tolerance in the multicultural environment of Azerbaijan, is the conglomerate of associations of harmonious relations among different nationalities and confessions, and places of compact residence of the Udi. This is, undoubtedly, the result of the historical impulses of the great Albanian heritage taken through the ages and preserved in the genes of this ancient people, and exigencies of the time, which gave the Udi a chance to identify and preserve their niche in the model of the ethnic and cultural environment of their historical homeland – Azerbaijan.

Visit by the Udi after the liberation from the occupation

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ART,
ARCHITECTURE

Garabagli Rizvan

Correspondent member of the International Academy of Architecture of Eastern Countries, Leading Research associate of the Institute of Architecture and Art of ANAS, PhD in Architecture, Associate Professor

ISLAMIC ARCHITECTURE IN IRAVAN



Fig. 1. Sardar (Shah Abbas, Abbas Mirza) Mosque. Painter: Dubois de Monpierre. Nineteenth century



Fig. 2. Different views of Shah Abbas Mosque

As we know from the history, the religion of Islam was widespread in the former Iravan khanate of Azerbaijan (today the Republic of Armenia) since the eighth century, hence, there have been mosques, madrasas and other places of worship here since ancient times.

According to sources, until 1912, there were 42 functioning mosques in Iravan uyezd of the Western Azerbaijan (today Armenia), 33 in Echmiadzin uyezd and 35 in Zangazur uyezd. The oldest of these mosques was built during the construction of Iravan fortress (1510) by order of Shah Ismayil and from then on, each neighborhood had their own mosque. Four of these mosques – **Novruzali Khan Mosque, Huseynali Khan/Blue Mosque, Khoja Safarbay Mosque** and **Mahammad Sartifkhan Mosque** – were located in the so-called “City” neighborhood of the fortress. Their magnificent portals, majestic domes and skyscraping minarets were architectural monuments that defined the skyline of the city.

One of such mosques was located near Sardar Palace (Fig. 1). The mosque, the foundation of which was laid at the time of construction of the Sardar Palace, was known as **Sardar Mosque**, Abbas Mirza Mosque and Shah Abbas Mosque in different periods. The name change suggests that each ruler had the mosque repaired and restored during his reign. For example, after liberating Iravan fortress from Ottomans in 1604, Shah Abbas I ordered an extensive restoration of the mosque based on the project of architect Sheikh Bahaaddin, who led the construction work, and we can assume that the Shah had the mosque completely dismantled and replaced by a new and even more magnificent mosque (Fig. 2).

By the way, it should be noted that, there is a similarity between Iravan-based **Shah Abbas Mosque** and Shah Abbas Mosques located in Gizil Hajili village of Goranboy, Yanikhli village of Tovuz and Ganja. In particular, their domes, portal construction and artistic architecture are identical. The architect of these mosques was also Sheikh Bahaaddin.

As with the Ganja-based mosque, the complex of Shah Abbas Mosque of Iravan also included a madrasa, a library and other buildings. The mosque’s minarets, decorated with rhombus-like ornaments, appeared as if covered with carpets. The artistic architecture of the pool built in its courtyard formed a harmony with the ornaments. On the other hand, the dome, façade and interior of Iravan mosque was decorated with dark blue and white floral ornaments and Quranic verses. The white-colored inscription engraved in Arabic script on the mosque’s blue portal had survived until early twentieth century. Azerbaijani scholar Isa Azimbayov, who visited Iravan in 1928, was able to read the following remaining line of

the inscription on the collapsed portal: “Zamane shah Abbas jannatmakan, Az u kasht abad mulke-jahan” [Nazim Mustafa, 2016].

While being in Iravan, Azimbayov saw the remains of another mosque near the mosque known by the names of Sardar Mosque or Shah Abbas Mosque or Abbas Mirza Mosque. According to him, this mosque was 9 m long and 6 m wide and had been built entirely of baked brick. The mosque used to have a low mihrab and a not so high entrance. Azimbayov writes that the inscription left on the entrance indicated the construction date of the mosque (1098 AH or 1685 AD) and read “Sange tarikhe shu magsud az dur zaman, kordan khadid be tarikhe gadim Ahmad khan” [Nazim Mustafa, 2016].

Ultimately, **Sardar Mosque**, which had been renovated by several rulers throughout history, suffered some destruction due to the dismantling of Iravan fortress beginning from 1864, but it was not totally destroyed. Hence, Armenian immigrants from Turkey settled here at the beginning of the twentieth century. However, the mosque was completely demolished during the Soviet era and replaced with multistory residential buildings. Only a piece of wall with a width and height of 3–4 m has survived from the mosque to our times (Fig. 3).

Travelers and researchers, who have been to Iravan, specifically note the **Blue Mosque** for its magnificent appearance, beautiful architecture and high minarets when writing about the architectural monuments of the city (Fig. 4). This unique masterpiece of Azerbaijani architecture began to be built in 1760, but saw some delays in its construction. The mosque's construction was eventually completed in 1765 with the funds allocated by Huseynali khan Gajar. This fact is mentioned in the inscription on the southern portal of the mosque. This is the reason the Blue Mosque was sometimes called “Huseynali Khan Mosque” by locals.

In 1768, the mosque underwent partial reconstruction and completion. At this time, the total length of the mosque was 97.2 m and its width was 66 m. This area included the winter and summer halls of the mosque, madrasa, library, different rooms for believers and a stone pool with a fountain in the middle of the green courtyard. The sides of the mosque's portal finished with an arrow-shaped arch and its imposing dome was decorated with tiles with geometric and floral ornaments of different colors. This mosque also resembles Shah Abbas Mosque of Ganja in terms of construction and artistic architecture. Most probably, during the reign of Shah Abbas, architect Sheikh Bahaaddin carried out the repair and reconstruction of the Blue Mosque. At this time, the mosque had four minarets. After the World War II, Armenians demolished three of its minarets and the mosque was left with one minaret. Even with one minaret, the Blue Mosque was a landmark monument in the city as a sign of Islam and a proof that these places belong to Azerbaijanis. However, Armenians went even further and set fire to the mosque twice. The first arson occurred in 1918, and the second one took place in March 1955. Each time, the mosque was restored with donations from Muslims. However, despite all these efforts, starting from 1936, Armenians used the Blue Mosque as a history museum for a long time, then as an armory during the World War II, as a nature museum in the post-war period, and for other purposes.



Fig. 3. Different wall remnants of Shah Abbas Mosque



Fig. 4. The portal and demolished dome of the Blue Mosque

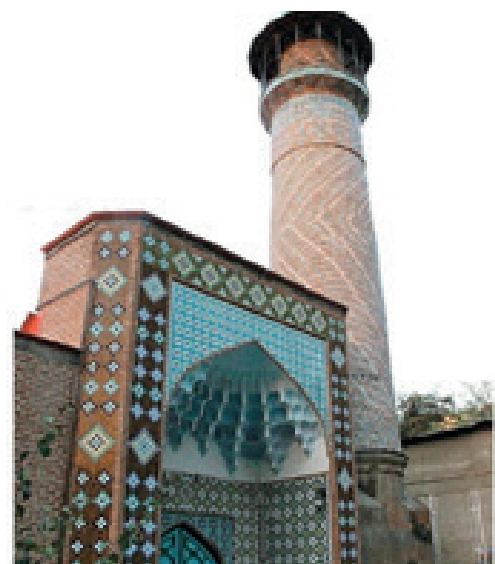


Fig. 5. The post-restoration views of the Blue Mosque

After gaining independence in 1991, the Republic of Armenia established diplomatic relations with some Muslim countries, including the Islamic Republic of Iran, and this led to the question of reverting the Blue Mosque to its original function. Thus, the nature museum was moved from the mosque in 1991, followed by the history museum in 1994. One year later, in 1995, Armenia and the Islamic Republic of Iran signed a contract for the restoration of the mosque. Under that contract, the Iranian government assumed the cost of all construction work to be carried out in the mosque complex and the execution of work was assigned to an Iranian charitable foundation “War Veterans and Martyrs”.

Restoration covered mainly the northern and south-western parts of the mosque complex, as well as its dome, minaret (24 m high), hall, library and rooms (28 rooms), and landscaping work was done in the yard. The entire work was completed in 2006. Using the Iranian state’s restoration of the Blue Mosque as a pretext, Armenians now present this mosque to the world as a Persian mosque (Fig. 5).

Haji Novruzali Mosque was located near the railway station of Iravan, in the eponymous neighborhood (Fig. 6). This neighborhood took its name from the grandson of a famous philanthropist named Gara Seyid. The abovementioned mosque was built by Gara Seyid in the seventeenth century and later overhauled by Haji Novruzali. Since then, both the neighborhood and the single-minaret mosque was called by the name of Haji Novruzali.

Haji Novruzali Mosque looks like a smaller form of the Blue Mosque both in terms of the construction form and architectural design. The domes, minarets and decorative tiles of both mosques are similar. Based on this fact and the coinciding construction dates, we can assume that both mosques were built by the same architect.

The mosque was headed by a person named Akhund Gasim for a long time. However, at the beginning of the twentieth century, Armenians completely burned down Haji Novruzali Mosque. **Div Sultan Mosque** in front of the bazaar suffered the same fate. Well-known French traveler Jean Chardin personally saw the mosques in a burnt and destroyed state when he was in Iravan in 1673.

After seizing Iravan fortress in 1724, Turkish commander Recep pasha ordered large-scale construction and renovation work in the city, including the construction of a new mosque. The mosque was called **Recep Pasha Mosque** in his honor.

In terms of design, the mosque was shaped like a parallelepiped. The architect chose this shape to blend the mosque with the landscape of the area. The arched mihrab, niches, pilasters and dome-covered ceiling construction of its interior, as well as the crescent attached to the top of its dome and the floral and geometric ornaments on its façade were a beautiful example of Oriental architecture.

By the way, it should be noted that, Shukurbayli Mosque also had the same architectural design and construction. However, after the capture of Iravan fortress by Russians in 1827, both mosques were reconstructed (architects V.Mirzoyev, I.Kitkin and M.Buynov) and converted into churches by erasing the Quranic verses in their interiors, building a new roof, replacing the crescents on the domes with crosses and adding new

columns to their façades. As a result, Recep Pasha Mosque was renamed as Russian Orthodox church and Shukurbayli Mosque was renamed as Holy Mother of God (Saint Mary) church (Fig. 7). The churches functioned until 1930 before themselves being destroyed by Armenians.

The mass demolition of Muslim monuments in Iravan was related to the development and approval of a master plan of the city in 1924. According to the plan, the Muslim monuments in Iravan were to be demolished and replaced with parks, squares and multistory buildings, and this is exactly what happened.

One of the mosques demolished under the master plan of Iravan was the **City or Zal Khan Mosque**. The mosque was located in the City neighborhood, on the present-day Republic Square of Iravan (Fig. 8). The mosque had an inscription written in an old script in Turkish language. The inscription indicated the construction date of the mosque as 1098 AH (1687 AD). As in all mosques in Iravan, the two-story mosque of Zal-Khan was divided into a hall for women and a hall for men, and a madrasa with numerous cells in front of it. The mosque resembled Recep Pasha Mosque with its arch, dome design and geometric and floral tile ornaments on its walls.

After the World War II, the mosque housed the exhibition hall of the House of Artists. In 1928, the large hall of the mosque was demolished and the Yerevan hotel was built in its place.

Another mosque with a minaret in Iravan was located in Tapabashi neighborhood (Fig. 9). Although the mosque is named after its neighborhood (**Tapabashi Mosque**), it was supposedly built by order of Abbasgulu Khan Iravanski. Abbasgulu's house is located next to the mosque. This seems to be the reason why it was assumed that the mosque had been built by Abbasgulu. Otherwise, the mosque would have been called Abbasgulu Mosque, rather than Tapabashi Mosque. The walls of the mosque were 1.5 m thick. Some parts and the minaret of **Tapabashi Mosque** were demolished in 1960, and the surviving part was inhabited by an Armenian family. This might be why the mosque survived for a while.

One of the Iravan mosques that has survived until our time (1988) was **Chatirli (Canopied) Mosque** built by Haji Jafar (Fig. 10). The mosque is known as **Damirbulag Mosque** due to its location in the eponymous neighborhood. Its inscription indicates its construction date as 1327 AH (1909 AD). The mosque resembled the previous ones in terms of design and artistic architecture, but lacked a minaret. Instead of a minaret, a canopied *guldasta* with a height of 2 m was installed on its roof. Thus, the mosque became known as a Canopied Mosque.

In connection with the incidents that broke out in Karabakh in February 1988, Damirbulag Mosque and the secondary school No.9 named after M.F. Akhundov, where Azerbaijanis studied, were set on fire.

Among the religious monuments of Iravan, mausoleums were of special importance in terms of history and architecture. Unfortunately, like mosques, they were also vandalized by Armenians from time to time. Luckily, some of them have survived to the present day.

One of such mausoleums is **Pir Hussein Mausoleum** located in Jafarabad village near Iravan (Fig. 11). Constructed of red tuff stone as a twelve-sided polygon, the mausoleum has survived to the present day



Fig. 6. Different views of Haji Novruzali Mosque



Fig. 7. Views of Recep Pasha Mosque converted into a church



Fig. 8. Zal Khan Mosque



Fig. 9. Tapabashi Mosque and its interior.
Currently inhabited by an Armenian family



Fig. 10. Damirbulag Mosque
or Canopied Mosque

with its 12-meter-high body and half-collapsed dome. The body of the monument, built in the Oriental architectural style, is surrounded by three belt-shaped cornices. Along the bottom of the upmost cornice, a 50-sm wide inscription with a total length of 22 m has been engraved in *Naskh* script with *Thuluth* elements (Fig. 12). According to epigraphist M.Nemat, who read the text of the inscription, the inscription indicates the construction date of the mausoleum as Rajab 15, A.H. 816 (which corresponds to October 11, 1413) [Hemat, 2001]. The inscription also states that the mausoleum was constructed by order of Pir Hussein and his father Emir Saad, emirs belonging to Saatli tribe of Chukhur Saad province. Interestingly, the architect who built such a magnificent mausoleum and engraved a 22-meter-long inscription on its frieze was not allowed to engrave his name. This proves once again that the architects, who lived and created throughout history, were not free to do anything with their own works. Sometimes the life of a craftsman, who answered affirmatively to the question of whether he could create a more beautiful work than his current work, ended with the completion of his current building project. As soon as the building was finished, jealous rulers killed them to prevent them from creating a second similar work.

Although Pir Hussein Mausoleum does not have the architect's name, the "three-leaf" ornaments along its frieze repeats the ornaments of the Salim caravanserai and monuments in the territory of Fuzuli, Jabrayil, Gubadli and Zangilan districts. Such artistic architectural elements belong to Ali Majidaddin school of architecture [Qarabağlı, 2017].

During explorations in Pir Hussein Mausoleum in 1939, Azerbaijani architects (L.Bretaniski, Q.Yelkin, L.Mamikonov and D.Motis) noted that it was similar to Momine Khatun Mausoleum, but simply built of stone. This once again proves that Ali Majidaddin style spread over a large geography, from Karabakh to Nakhchivan.

There were numerous tombstones and several small mausoleums in the area where the Pir Hussein monument is located. Armenians living nearby gradually dismantled them and used the stone blocks to build houses. It should be noted that Jafarabad village, where Pir Hussein Mausoleum is located, was inhabited by Azerbaijanis until 1828. The Armenians, who had been resettled from Iran since 1830, gradually evicted Azerbaijanis from the village under the auspices of the Russians and carried out demolition work. As if that was not enough, they present the mausoleum to the public as a "Turkmen monument", ignoring the large inscription on the monument.

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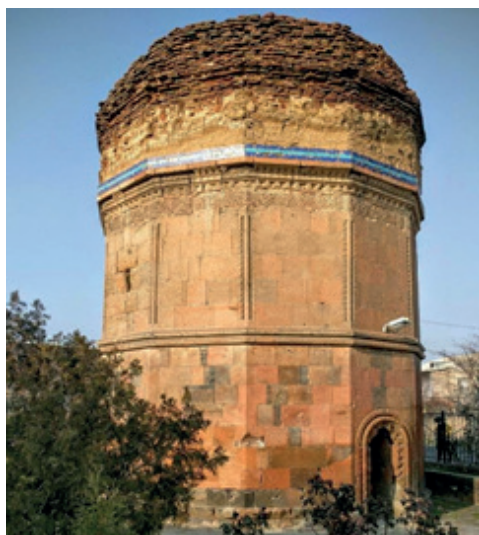
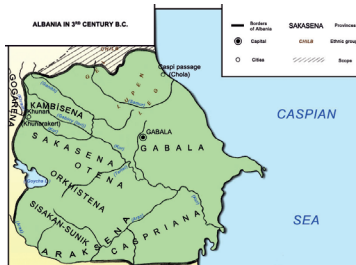


Fig. 11. Pir Hussein Mausoleum and a fragment of its frieze with inscription

Hajiyeva Ulviyya

Leading Research Fellow of the Ethnoarchaeology Department of the Institute of Archaeology, Ethnography and Anthropology of ANAS, PhD in History

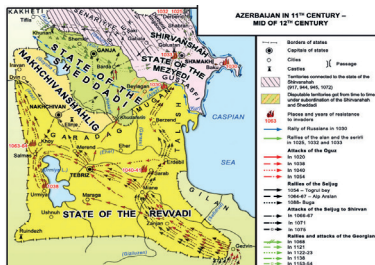
ALBANIAN MONUMENTS OF TARTAR AND KALBAJAR REGIONS OF AZERBAIJAN



Map 1. Albania in the 3rd century BC



Map 2. Albania in the 5th–8th centuries



Map 3. Azerbaijan in the 11th–mid 12th centuries



Map 4. Azerbaijan in the 16th century

Albanian monuments of ancient time, both of the left bank of the Kura and Karabakh, are an integral part of Azerbaijan's ethnocultural heritage.

It should be noted that the territory of the Tartar and Kalbajar district of the Republic of Azerbaijan for centuries was an integral part of all state formations that stretched from Derbent in the north to the Aras river in the south and from the Caspian Sea in the east to the borders of Georgia: Albania (4th century BC–8th century AD), Sajids (9th–10th centuries), Sallarids (10th century), Shaddadids (11th–12th centuries) [Шарифли, 1978, с.30-89, 344], Atabeks–Ildegizids (12th–13th centuries) [Бунятов, 1978], Ilkhanate, Jalayirids (13th–15th centuries) [Пириев, 1987, с.98-105; Пириев, 2005, с. 59; Piriyeu, 2002], Qara Qoyunlu, Aq Qoyunlu (15th century); being part of the Karabakh–Ganja beglarbegdom in the 16th–18th centuries as part of the Safavid state [Эфендиев, 1987, с.114; Карабах: история в контексте конфликта, 2014].

The population of this region was multi-ethnic and multi-faith, which accounts for the age-old traditions of tolerance and makes the foundation for modern multiculturalism in Azerbaijan. For centuries, the formation of both Christian and Islamic cultures took place in parallel, which was reflected in their mutual influence in various spheres, including architecture and arts, creating a colorful palette of the ethnocultural heritage of modern Azerbaijan.

The Albanian ethnic layer played an important role in the ethnogenesis of the Azerbaijani people, being one of its ancestors, and also left a rich historical and cult heritage in architecture, both on the left bank of the Kura and in Karabakh (fortresses, monastic complexes, churches, chapels).

It should be noted that after the fall of the Albanian statehood in 705 [Каланкат., III, 12, с.254], during the 9th–13th centuries, within the above Azerbaijani states, small Albanian kingdoms-principalities emerged which were headed by the descendants of Albanian princely families: Atrnerseh in Khachen, Ketritch in Gardman, Stepan Kia in Utik, Esayi Abu-Muse in Arran, Sahl ibn Sunbat in Shaki, Arran, Syunik [Каланкат., III, 22, с.278; Бунятов, 1965, с.184-194]. In 886, of "Small Syunik and Aghvank" Grigor Hamam the Pious, one of the sons of Khachen ruler Atrnerseh and the grandson of "the leader of the Syunik people" Sahl, "having become the Albanian king, revived the destroyed kingdom of Albania", "did great and generous benefits to churches, to those in need and the have-nots" [Каланкат., III, 21]. According to al-Mas'udi, he was called "the great prince of the East" and "the king of Albania"; Asoghik also called Hamam "The King of Aghvank". Grigor Hamam's domain stretched from the eastern coast of the Goycha lake in the west to the proximity

of the city of Partaw (Barda) in the east [Каланкат., III, 22; Бунятов, 1965, с.189]. Artsakh and partly the province of Utik passed to his son Sahak Sevada, whose reign lasted till the 11th century [Каланкат., III, 21, 22]. He subdued the Gardman region in the Utik province, Kust-i-Parnes in the Artsakh province, and Tsoroget (Shirak) in the Ararat province. By the end of the 12th century, Artsakh-Khachen principality-kingdom arose in Karabakh, in the basin of the Khachen-Chai and the Tartar rivers, the revival of which is associated with the reign of Albanian prince Hasan Jalal (1214–1261) descending lineally from the Mihranid family [Орбели, 1909, с.429; Орбели, 1963, с.157-158; Орбели, 1968, с.213; Mammedova, 1991, p.307-310; Мамедова, 2005, с.75, 223, 408-410]. In written sources, he is called “The Prince of princes”, “The Kingly brilliant”, “The Prince of the Khachen lands”, “The Great Prince of Khachen and Artsakh”, “The King of Albania”, “The Great Border-Keeper of Albania” [Мамедова, 2005, с.408-413]. Later, until the end of the 18th century, the descendants of Albanian princely families headed the feudal domains in Karabakh, which in the 15th century were named melikdoms (Gulustan, Jrabert, Khachen, Varanda, Dizak) [Раффи, Mustafazadə, 2010, s.125-127].

It should be noted that all Albanian historical and religious monuments of the present Tartar and Kalbajar districts of Azerbaijan, including the fortresses of the Albanian Khachen, Aterk and Jrabert princes, monasteries, churches and chapels consecrated during the period of the independent patriarchate of Albanian catholicoi, were built during the 5th–13th centuries and some in the 17th century.

The Karabakh Khanate arose in the second half of the 18th century [Алиев, 1987, с.133, 136-138;

Mustafazadə, 2010, s.28-51], was conquered, occupied by tsarism in 1805, 1813 and finally after the Treaty of Turkmenchay in 1828.

During a series of political and administrative reforms in the late 19th–early 20th centuries, the territory of the present-day Tartar and Kalbajar districts became part of the Javanshir Uyezd of Elizavetpol Governorate, created in 1873 [КК на 1878 год, 1877, с.323, 326, на 1910 год. Ч.1, 1909, с.483; ЭСБЕ, Т.Ха (1893), с.528, Мильман, 1966, с.157].

Javanshir Uyezd was also part of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic (1918–1920).

On April 28, 1920, the Azerbaijan SSR was formed and the Javanshir region was established as part of it in 1920, including the Tartar district (1920–1922). In 1922, the Tartar district was renamed into Javanshir district as part of Aghdam (1923–1929) and Karabakh (1929–1930) districts.

The administrative and territorial reform of August 8, 1930 provided for the establishment of the Kalbajar district located in the valley of the Tartar River, in the Lesser Caucasus, and the Tartar district with the center in the city of Tartar, in the western part of the Kura–Aras Lowland with the Tartar, Inja-Chai and Khachen-Chai rivers. After a number of renamings, on February 7, 1991, the name “Tartar district” was returned.

In 1923, the Autonomous Region of Nagorno-Karabakh was created and renamed in 1936 to NKAO [К истории образования НКАО, 1989], and part of the villages of the Javanshir region was included in its Mardakert district.

On February 5, 1991, Supreme Soviet of the Azerbaijan SSR adopted Law No. 4-XII on changing the name of the republic to “Azerbaijan Republic”.

On August 30, 1991, the “Declaration on the Restoration of State Independence of the Republic of



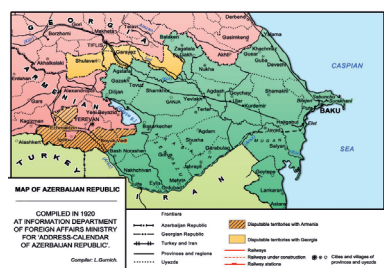
Maps 5. Occupation of Northern Azerbaijan by tsarism



Map 6. Javanshir Uyezd of Elizavetpol Governorate. 1903.



Map 7. ADR (1918–1920)



Map 8. Azerbaijan SSR. 1920

Azerbaijan” was adopted and a parliamentary republic with presidential administration was established.

On November 26, 1991, the Supreme Council of Azerbaijan adopted a law on the abolition of the NKAO [Цуциев, 2006, с.90] and renaming the Mardakert district into Aghdara district with its center in Aghdara (former Martakert township). It included Aghdara, two townships named Madagiz and Leninavan, and about 61 villages. Leninavan was renamed to Shikharkh on December 29, 1991.

According to the Decree of the Milli Majlis of the Azerbaijan Republic No.287 of August 25, 1992, the settlements of Shikharkh, Hasangaya, Chayli, Seysulan, Talish, Garmiravan and Maghavuz of the Aghdara district were transferred to the Tartar district.

Decree No.327 of October 13, 1992 abolished the Aghdara district which was divided between Tartar, Kalbajar and Aghdam districts [Azərbaycan Respublikasının inzibati ərazi bölgüsündə qismən dəyişiklik edilməsi haqqında Azərbaycan Respublikası Milli Məclisinin qərarı. №327. Bakı şəhəri, 13 oktyabr 1992-ci il].

According to the decree of October 13, 1992, about 28 settlements were included in the Tartar district, including Aghdara, one settlement and a number of villages, including Umudlu, Zeylik, Metsshen (now Ulu Qarabey), Mohretagh (now Kichik Qarabey), Aghabeylenj (now Aghabeyyali), Maghavuz (now Chardaqli), Akop Kamari (now Lulesaz), Minqrelsk (now Meqrelalay), Nerkin Oratağ (now Aşağı Oratağ), Qasapet, Janyatag, Demirli, Gulyatag. Some of them still preserve Albanian antiquities.

However, the entire Karabakh (both highland and lowland) had been occupied by Armenian military forces for almost 30 years until the fall of 2020, when, under the leadership of the President of Azerbaijan and the Valiant Supreme Commander, the Great Liberator General, Ilham Aliyev, the victorious Azerbaijani army within 44 days (September 27 – November 10) liberated Jabrayil district together with the city of Jabrayil (04.10.2020), Fuzuli district together with the city of Fuzuli (17.10.2020), Zangilan district together with the city of Zangilan (20.10.2020), Qubadli district together with the city of Qubadli (25.10.2020), a number of villages of Khojaly district (09/27/2020; 11/07/09/2020), Hadrut (10/09/2020) and a number of villages of Khojavend district (14-16, 20, 23, 27-31. (08.11.2020), and the crown jewel of Karabakh, the city of Shusha (08.11.2020).

According to the trilateral statement of November 10, 2020, the following areas were returned to Azerbaijan: Aghdam district together with the city of Aghdam (20.11.2020), Kalbajar district together with the city of Kalbajar (25.11.2020), Lachin district together with the city of Lachin (01.12.2020); districts of Khojavend, Khojaly, Terter, Khankendi (10.11.2020), some of territories of which are now under the control of Russian peacekeepers.

During the Patriotic War, on October 3, 2020, the village of Madagiz of Tartar district was de-occupied by Azerbaijani troops and, according to the decree of October 7, 2020, was renamed to Sugovushan. On October 9, the village of Chayli was liberated from occupation. In general, in the fall of 2020, Azerbaijan restored control over the villages in the north-east of the Tartar district: Sugovushan, Talish, Shikharkh, Chayli, Hasangaya.

Today, according to the administrative structure of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Tartar district includes 2 cities (Tartar and Aghdara), a settlement and 74 villages [İnzibati ərazi bölgüsü təsnifatı, 2020, c.95-96]. However, villages Giziloba and Seysulan are on the line of contact, and 18 settlements, some of which have Albanian antiquities, are under the control of Russian peacekeepers.

Over the decades of the 20th–early 21st centuries, Azerbaijani historians, architects, archaeologists, anthropologists and art critics did not have the opportunity to thoroughly investigate all the Albanian antiquities of Karabakh, the information about which is preserved in written sources of the 8th-19th centuries and in some published works. Obstacles were created by the NKAO authorities who did not allow specifically Azerbaijani scientists to these monuments, while Albanian monuments were systematically Gregorinized with the involvement of scientists from Armenia who had visited Karabakh more than once: 1) erasing the texts of the original epigraph on them and replacing them with texts indicating that the temples belonged to Armenians; 2) replacement of Albanian crosses with Armenian ones and illegal export of Albanian crosses to Armenia to further exhibit them in museums as a genuine Armenian heritage; 3) mounting Armenian crosses on Albanian monasteries and on a number of large churches. During the occupation, almost all the monuments of the Muslim culture of Karabakh were savagely destroyed, illegal archaeological excavations were carried out engaging foreign scientists, and artifacts of various periods (Paleolithic, Neolithic, bronze, etc.) found here were illegally exported to Armenia and declared to belong to the Armenian culture. In order to give Armenian-Gregorian appearance to Albanian temples, a number of large Karabakh monasteries and churches proved by written sources of the 8th–19th centuries to be Albanian, were repaired (not restored). As for a large number of smaller Albanian churches and chapels, they were completely disregarded: various inscriptions in Russian and Armenian that are impermissible in religious temples were left on their walls, proving that, in general, the Albanian heritage is not an ethnocultural heritage of Armenians.

The entire policy regarding the Muslim and Albanian cult heritage of Karabakh pursued only one goal: tearing away the entire territory of Karabakh (highland and lowland) in violation of all

international rights and illegal annexation of these lands to Armenia.

It should be noted that the following ancient Albanian monuments are found on the territory of the present-day Tartar district of Azerbaijan.

Talish village, known as Urekan in the early Middle Ages, is mentioned in “The History of the Albanians” by M.Kaghankatvatsi; the village has given its name to the **Glhovank/Urekvank monastery**. In the late Middle Ages, this village was the residence of the meliks of Gulistan – the Melik-Beglyarovs, who, according to Raffi, were ethnically of Udi origin.

The monastery of Glhovank/Urekvank (5th century) was built on the northern slope of a wooded mountain behind the village of Talish. Its name (“glho”- head, “vank”- temple) was associated with the legend mentioned in “The History of the Albanians” about the uncovering of relics of St.Elisha, over which this monastery was built on the site of an earlier church. This is evidenced by Kaghankatvatsi and Bishop Barkhudaryan that when a group of priests discovered the relics of St.Elisha in the village of Gomenk (now Bum, Qabala district), priest Stefan from Urekan stole his head and brought to the temple of his village, after which the body of the saint was also transferred here, i.e. from Gabala to Karabakh. Later, the relics of St.Elisha were transferred to the Nerskhmihra/Jrvishtik monastery



Map 9. Tartar district



Map 10. Karabakh

which as a result was named **St. Elisha (Yeghishe Arakyal)** [Каланкат., I, с.7-8; Бархударянц, 1893, с.256, 280]. The Glhovank/Urekvank monastery consisted of a church, a narthex, a bell tower, a vast cemetery, and other ruined buildings surrounded with a defensive wall. The inscription above the entrance, preserved until the end of the 19th century, testified that the monastery was being completed until the 13th century. [Бархударянц, II, 241]. Barkhudaryants reports that “many bishops and deacons were buried in the narthex, so that the entire floor is paved with gravestones. Not only the dead from among the brethren are buried here; the tombs of the glorious family of Melik-Beglyarovs hold a brilliant place with their beautiful monuments and long inscriptions and patterned gravestones” [Бархударянц, II, 241-242].

North of this monastery was **the residence castle** of the meliks of Gulustan, built in the early 18th century as a complex with towers, surrounded by a wall and known as Karaburg (“four-tower”) [Бархударянц, II, с.231; Мкртчян, 1988, с.59-61].

The Monastery of St. Elishe (Yeghishe Arakyal) of the 5th century was built at the foot of the Murovdagh by Albanian king Vachagan III and in “The History of the Albanians” was referred to as the holy abode of Nerskhmihra/Jrvishtik. The name of *St. Elishe* was added to the name of the temple due to the transfer of his holy relics here, as stated above [Каланкат., I, с.7-8]. The complex consisted of a church, 7 chapels, a cemetery and ruined buildings. On both sides of the church there were three chapels used as a burial vault. One of them contained the tomb of Vachagan III, and the other two contained the tomb of Jrabert melik Atam and bishop Melikset. According to Barkhudaryants, “in the 3rd chapel, there is the grave of Aghvank king Vachagan III, with a triangular gravestone on it, made

especially carefully and smoothly polished (length 1m 60 cm), but without an inscription. Not far from this gravestone is a stone cross remarkable not only for its old age, but also for its architectural form of art and ancient sculptural style. The face stone of this chapel which has a single tabernacle bears the words: “This is the tomb of King Vachagan III”. In the vicinity of the monastery there were the ruins of the Ukhti-matur chapel [Бархударянц, II, с.246-249].

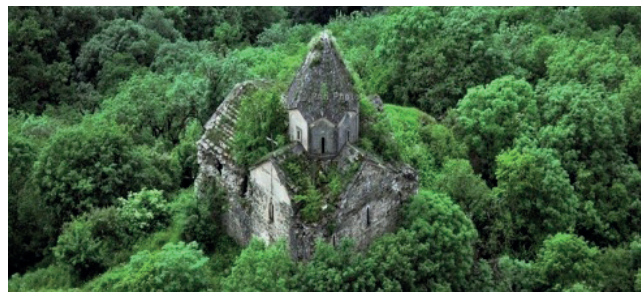


St. Elishe/ Jrvishtik monastery

Nearby was the village of Tutot with **the church of Kotrats ekhtsi** (13th century)[Мкртчян, 1988, с.56-57].

The Tatevi Mets Anapat monastery was built northwest of Jrabert, which includes a one-nave basilica and monastic cells.

The monastery of Yerek Mankunk/ Yerits Mankants (“Three youths”) is located near Jrabert and was built in the 17th century. According to Barkhudaryants, there was an inscription on the facade of the tabernacle: “...in 1113 (1664) this church was laid to the glory of Jesus...”; on the face stone above the entrance: “In 1140 (1691), under Shah Suleiman, the great king of Persia, I, Simeon, by the grace of God Catholicos of Aghvank, built this church...” [Бархударянц, II, с.244-245]. The building is a three-nave domed basilica with an asymmetrical structure.



The monastery of Yerek Mankunk/ Yerits Mankants («Three youths»)

Sugovushan (Madagiz) village is known for the Church of St. Elishe built in its northwestern part in the Middle Ages.



Church of St. Elishe

Dyutakan village located in the forest between the villages of Talish and Sugovushan (Madagiz), was the summer residence of Albanian king Vachagan III. Here are the ruins of a 12th century church [Бархударянц, II, с.242].

Maghavuz (Chardagli) village. It is believed that either in the place of this village itself or near it was the ancient settlement of Kaghankatuik known as the home village of the author of "The History of the Albanians", in which in the early Middle Ages there was either a church or a monastery. This is evidenced by the fact that the "Priest of Kaghankatuik" attended the Aguen Council of the 5th century, convened by Albanian king Vachagan III [Каланкатуаци, 1861, гл.26, с.66]. C.Dowsett, based on the opinion of W.B.Henning, believes that the nickname of Kaghankatvatsi refers to the name of the Kaghankatuik monastery, to which Moses was a member [Dowsett. C.J.F. The Albanians Chronicle

of Mkitar Gos. BSOAS, XXI, 1958, p.476; p.XIX; Мамедова, 2005, с.32].

In the area called Khanegah, between the villages of Maghavuz and Metshen, there were the ruins of the settlement of Kakhakateh. Among the ruins was **the palace of the Jrabert meliks** [Бархударянц, II, с.232, 235; Мкртчян, 1988, с.52, 58].

Two more Jrabert meliks palaces were built in Mokhratagh (now Kichik Garabey) and in the Mayrakahag area – **the Kahakatekh fortress** [Бархударянц, II, с.234, 251], as well as **the Jrabert fortress** on the top of the cliff at the confluence of the Tartar and Turagaychay rivers [Бархударянц, II, с.251-252].



Jrabert fortress

In the village of Metsshen, in the 17th century, **the stone church of St. George** was built on 4 columns [Бархударянц, II, с.231]. In the 13th century, a stone 4-column **Theotokos Church** was built in Qasapet village on the left slope of a narrow water gorge [Бархударянц, II, с.227]. On the Beshik-dag there was a 7th century church and to the east of the Shakhbulagh spring – the ruins of the tower of Albanian prince Намат [Мкртчян, 1988, с.64].



Map 11. Kalbajar district

Now Kalbajar district of the Republic of Azerbaijan borders on the Tartar, Aghdam, Khojaly, Lachin, Dashkesan, Goygol, Goranboy districts and de jure includes the city of Kalbajar, Istisu and 145 villages [İnzibati ərazi bölgüsü təsnifatı, 2020, c.63-64].

According to the 1980 data, the district (1936 sq. km.) included the city of Kalbajar, the urban settlement of Istisu and 122 villages. The population was 40.3 thousand people: Azerbaijanis (103 villages), Kurds (7 villages), Ayrums (12 villages)¹.

As can be seen, until 1992, Armenians had never inhabited the territory of Kalbajar district.

It should be noted that 5 Azerbaijani villages – Gunashli, Gasimlar, Dashbulagh, Hajikend and Qanlikend – have preserved Albanian monuments. Until 1992, the villages of Guneshli and Gasimlar had been called *Kilseli* because there were several Albanian churches in each of them. The former name of the village of Dashbulagh was also *Kilseli* as there was an Albanian church here. Hajikend was formerly known as *Siniqkilse*, which was associated with the ruins of an Albanian church on the territory of the village.

Near Qanlikend, also known as Lev, Kneravan, there are the ruins **of the Handaberd fortress** built by Albanian prince Atrnersekh in the 9th century on the top of a wooded and steep mountain, 600 m from the right bank of the Levchay river, due to which the fortress was also called Lekh, Löh. The path leading to the fortress runs under the southwestern fortress wall on the north side. Several stone inscriptions were preserved on the territory of the fortress, one of which said that “Catholicos of Aghvank Stepannos” was buried here. There are five patriarchs of the Albanian Church with this name: I (993–1079), II (1129–1131), III (1155–1195), IV (1262–1323), V (about 1476) [Никоноров, 2005, с.181].

East of this fortress, 0.5 km south of the right bank of the Levchay river, in the middle of a valley framed by wooded mountains, there are the ruins of the **Handaberd monastery** built of unworked and roughly worked stone using lime mortar and consisting of a domed church and a chapel.



Handaberd fortress



Handaberd monastery

According to Decree No.327 of October 13, 1992, the following 23 villages of Aghdara district, a number of which had Albanian monuments, were transferred to Kalbajar district: Charektar, Gozlu (Vagauz), Kotavan, Yukhari Oratag (Verin Oratag), Gyzylgaya (Arutunagomer), Yayiji (Gochogot), Devedashi (Pogosogomer), Heyvali (Drmbon), Childiran, Mehmana, Dovshanli (Arajadzor), Hayat, Bazarkand (Tsmakahogh), Shakhmansurlu (Shakhmasur), Vanklu, Chormanli (Garnak), Imaret, Imaret Garvend, Zardakhach, Chapar, Hasanriz (Aterk), Naryndjlar (Nareshtar), Damgali, Kolatagh.

¹ *Azərbaycan toponimlərinin ensiklopedik lüğəti (Encyclopedic glossary of toponyms of Azerbaijan). İki cildə. I. Bakı: Şərq-Qərb, 2007;*

Azərbaycan toponimlərinin ensiklopedik lüğəti (Encyclopedic glossary of toponyms of Azerbaijan). İki cildə. II. Bakı: Şərq-Qərb, 2007;

Kalbəcər rayonu (Kalbajar district) /Azərbaycan Sovet Ensiklopediya. T.V. / Red. C.Quliyev. Bakı: Azərbaycan Sovet ensiklopediya baş redaksiyası, Bakı, 1981, s.334.

As a result, the area increased to 3,050 sq.km to include 145 villages.

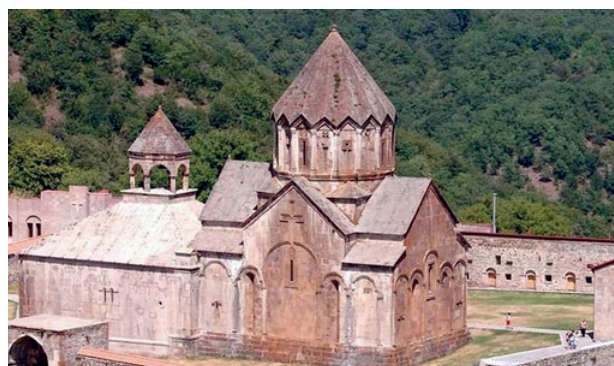
However, in 1993–2020, Kalbajar district was occupied by armed Armenians and renamed into Shaumyan district: a number of Azerbaijani villages and 23 villages of the Aghdara district (according to the decree of 1992) were included in the so-called Mardakert district.

On November 25, 2020, the President of Azerbaijan and Valiant Supreme Commander-in-Chief Ilham Aliyev, in his address to the people announced the complete transfer of Kalbajar district under the control of the Azerbaijani army. The de-occupied territories included: Glinjli, Nadirkhanli, Gamishli, Zulfugarli, Baglypyaya, Ganlikend, Zar, Seidlyar, Almalig, Siniqilse, Chaikend; and out of 23 villages (according to the 1992 decree) – only 17 villages. The villages of Vanklu, Charektar, Imaret Garvend, Chapar, Damgali, Zardakhach, Kotavan are now covered by the control zone of the Russian peacekeepers.

Now there are the following Albanian historical and cult monuments on the territory of Kalbajar district.

Vanklu village. In this village, in 1216–1238, Albanian prince Hasan Jalal built the **Gandzasar monastery** in the name of St. John the Baptist. Its epigraph read as follows: “I, the humble servant of God, Jalal Dola, the son of Vakhtang, the grandson of the great Hasan, the authentic ruler of the high and great Artsakh land and the sovereign of multiple provinces; my father instructed me and my mother Khorisha to build this church on the grave of our fathers in Gandzasar, which we started to build in 665 (1216) ...This church was consecrated in 689 (1240) in the patriarchate of ter Nerses, the Catholicos of Aghvank” [Бархударянц, с.154-156, 160, примеч. 403]. Prince Hasan Jalal generously endowed the monastery with arable land and silver church utensils listed in detail in the inscription. This monastery was built opposite the Khokhanaberd fortress in place of an older church of the 9th–10th centuries [Орбеян, 1910, с.278-279] and the burial vaults of the Khachen princes. Hasan Jalal was buried here after he was killed in Qazvin in 1261 by the order of Arghun. His body was delivered here by his son Atabek [Бархударянц, I, с.157, примеч.19, 403]. Until 1836, the Gandzasar Monastery was the center of the Albanian Catholicosate with the last patriarch being Sargis (Sergei) Hasan Jalal, who was buried

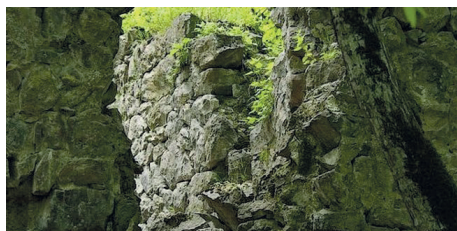
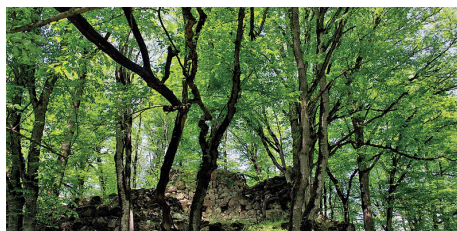
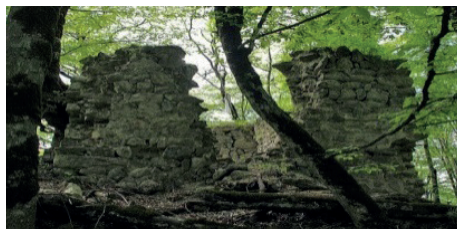
here in 1828 [Бархударянц, I, с.5-6; Мкртчян, 1988, с.14-18; Мамедова, 2004, с.29]. The narthex of the monastery was a burial place of the Albanian Catholicos as evidenced by Bishop Barkhudaryants: “Gregory the Catholicos of Aghvank, in 1120 (1653)”; “This is the grave of Jeremiah the Catholicos of Aghvank from the Jalal Dola clan in 1149 (1700)”; “This is the grave of Esayi the Catholicos of Aghvank from the Jalal Dola clan in 1177 (1728)”; “Catholicos Hovhannes” [Барх, ч.I, 157]; “Catholicos David, son of Baghdasar-bek”; “This is the grave of Hovhannes the Catholicos of Aghvank from the Jalal Dola clan in 1235 (1786)”; “This is the grave of Sargis the Catholicos of Aghvank in 1277 (1828)”; here is also the grave of “Metropolitan Baghdasar, archpastor ordained by the Emperor, the head of the House of Aghvank from the clan of the Great Prince Jalal, the ruler of the Artsakh country in 1303 (1854)” [Бархударянц, I, с.157].



Gandzasar monastery

Hasan Jalal's palace / Khokhanaberd fortress or Tarkhana-kala was built by Hasan Jalal on the top of the mountain as the residence of the principality near the village of Vanklu, opposite the Gandzasar monastery. Inside the fortress, in a few meters from the ruins of the palace, there were **2 medium-sized basilicas**. Bishop Barkhudaryants in the late 19th century noted that this was “a spacious structure which consisted of numerous rooms adjacent to the fortress wall and built of stones using lime mortar. The most attractive part of the Jalal-Dawla palace is the reception room and one of the rooms, which reflect the architectural style of the time. The rooms have solid high walls and vaulted ceilings. The wall arches made with cut wedges are supported by thin and skillfully crafted capitals. The windows are very narrow and sparse. It was not possible to establish

the exact number of rooms, since they are all covered with dense thickets, trees, and raspberry bushes. Research cannot be conducted without removing thickets” [Бархударянц, II, с.210]. Since then, this Albanian monument of antiquity has collapsed to the ground.



Ruins of the Hasan Jalal palace/Khokhanaberd fortress

At a distance of 30 km from the fortress, there was an **observation tower**.

The ruins of the palace of Ruzan, the daughter of Hasan Jalal, are located near the fortress.

The ruins of the Darpasner palace belonging to Hasan Jalal family are located north of the fortress on a picturesque rocky hill. The architectural features of this princely palace were later used in the palaces of the Karabakh meliks. Two **similar basilicas** were built near Darpasner on the left bank of the Khachen River in a place called Kerakhani Art [Мкртчян, 1988, с.20-23].

The 12th century Havaptuk Monastery complex (a small church, a narthex and a tiny church) was built 5 km south of Gandzasar, on the top of the mountain. According to Barkhudaryants, in the late 19th century, the inscription on the face stone of the door of the small altar was preserved: “In 612 (1163),

in the principality of Hasan, the son of Vakhtang and his wife Mamkan, me, John the nephew of Gregory and nephew Gevork and other monks built these churches to save our souls and in memory of our parents” [Бархударянц, I, с.161]. According to another inscription, the church was rebuilt in 1223 under Hasan Jalal. The Havaptuk monastery was also a princely family burial vault.



Havaptuk monastery

In the vicinity of Gandzasar, the **Mukdisi church** was built, and south-west of the Vank village was the **fortress of Ruzan** (daughter of Hasan Jalal) with a church (13th century).

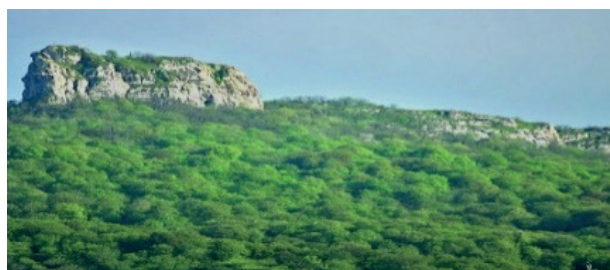
The ruins of Vachar urban settlement in which Hasan Jalal built a church in 1229, with a small chapel called **Vachar-Tsmakaokh** (St.Stepanos Church and Manka Church) adjoining to the southern wall of it, are located east of Gandzasar [Мкртчян, 1988, с.23-24].

Kolatag village is one of the ancient settlements of Khachen, which has Albanian monuments dating back to the 9th–18th centuries. In the village there were **chapel** ruins and khachkars of the 12th century. In the vicinity of the village, in the forests on the tops of the hills, there were the 12th century **Koshik Anapat monastery**, the **monastery of St.Jacob (Hakob Mets-i anats or Mets-Arants)**, and fortresses of the Khachen princes **Kachakhakaberd, Natarin, Det, Tsiranakar**.

The 12th century Koshik Anapat monastery was built 8 km from the village of Kolatag in the forest on the hill. It consisted of three churches and a three-arched narthex-chapel, surrounded by a stone fence. The refectory adjoined the chapel, and to the northwest were the ruins of cells and other buildings.

The monastery of St.Jacob (Hakob Mets-anats or Mets-Arants) of the 13th century was built on a wooded spur north of the village of Kolatag, near the right bank of the Khachen-Chai River. According to Barkhudaryants, at the end of the 19th century there was an inscription outside, above the door of the second church, which read: "In 661 (1222), me, Horishah, the wife of Vakhtang, the owner of Khachen, the daughter of Sargis, the sister of Zacharias and Ivane again built this church of the Metz-Arants" [Бархударянц, I, с.152]. The main part of the buildings was built in the 12th–13th centuries. The monastery consists of two churches, two narthices, the dwelling unit, amenities, and is surrounded by a wall. The first church is called St.Jacob, with older cells at the northern wall of it. This monastery was a diocesan center, and in the 13th century the seat of the Albanian Catholicos was located here [Мкртчян, 1988, с.25-27]. Some of the architectural features of this temple are reminiscent of the Khudavank/ Dadivank monastery, which confirms the commonality of the Albanian building traditions. Another church adjoins the northern wall of the narthex of the first church, which has a three-arched narthex and a narthex-chapel. One of the narthices of the second church served as the burial vault of the nobility and, according to Barkhudaryants, of some Albanian Catholicos "Hovhannes, Aristakes, Simeon 1060 (1611)" [Бархударянц, I, 152]. The monks' cells were located to the east of the churches in the lowlands.

The Kachakhakaberd fortress (the Khachen fortress of the 9th century) was built on the top of a wooded mountain range, opposite the Hakobavank/ Metsavanits (St.Jacob) monastery [Бархударянц, II, с.209].



*The Kachakhakaberd fortress
(the Khachen fortress of the 9th century)*

The **churches of Khndzani** and **Maturi** were built in the forests near Kolatag, along with the **Ekhtsun Khut** church on the hill and another **church** in the Zarunts-tap area. East of Kolatag, at the confluence of the Khachen and Kolatag rivers, there are the ruins of a **13th-century fortress**. A **chapel** was built on the hill to the south of the village.

In the vicinity of the villages of Dovshanli (Arachadzor), Kichan, Childiran, Gulyatag, Mohratag, Kusapat and Kazanchi, there were a number of Albanian ancient monuments.

In **Dovshanli (Arachadzor)**, there is the 18th century three-nave **Theotokos** (Surb Astvatsatsin) **basilica**, and on the southern outskirts of the village, under a rock, there is the **Harva-Anapat church (monastery)**, consisting of **two 13th-century cave chapels**.

Three km from Kichan, to the northeast of the slope, there was the **12th century** Anapat monastery consisting of two churches, a narthex, a refectory, and cells [Мкртчян, 1988, с.29-30].

On the site of the old village of Mohratag, **a palace of meliks was built** [Бархударянц, II, с.229-230]. Near Nor-Mohratag in the village of Metshen, **St.George church** was built in the 17th century [Бархударянц, II, с.231].

In the village of Childiran, traces of the fortress were preserved, along with the traces of the Karmir Church (13th century) in the vicinity of the village and traces of the Amenaprkich church (12th–13th centuries) in the valley between Chaldiran, Devedashi, Kochokhot, Heyvali.

The village of Kazanchi on the left bank of the Khachen at the northern foot of Chobandagh (Vankasar) is known for being the site of the **13th century St.George's Basilica** and the **Karmir church** located on the hill [Бархударянц, II, с.225]. In the village of Gulyatag was the **melik palace** [Бархударянц, II, с.226-227].

The valley of the Tartar River abounds in ancient Albanian monuments: the prince's residence in Tsar with the churches of St.Sergius (Sargis), St.Grigor, St.Theotokos and the Getamich monastery (12th–13th centuries); the Khutavank/Dadivank monastery, with the Levonaberd fortress opposite to it, the Khatravank monastery and the Khatra fortress.

The Khudavank/Dadivank monastery (6th–13th centuries), located in the village of Vank, according to a legend, was founded in the

1st century by a pupil of Apostle Thaddeus named Dadi, who was ethnically Jewish, hence the peculiarity of his name. The temple was built on the site of a pagan sanctuary, which for centuries was called Khudavank, Khotavank, Gotavank, which means the “temple of God”, “heavenly temple”. According to Barkhudaryants, “the year of construction is unknown, since this antiquity was gradually restored at different times, thus, the antiquity has completely disappeared” [Бархударянц, ч.II, с.215]. Since 1142, the head of the Artsakh-Khachen principality had been Hasan, the son of Sakar Vakhtang. Hasan married Mama-Khatun, the daughter of king Kiurike. In 1182, Hasan, after 40 years of reign, took the monastic vows together with his wife. He had six sons. It should be noted that Hasan called himself the owner of the fortresses of Haterk, Handaberd, Khachenaberd and Khavkakhagats. One of the sons of Hasan, Vakhtang, nicknamed Tankik or Tonkik, the ruler of the Lower Khachen, married Horishah, the sister of the brothers Zakharia Spasalar and Ivane Atabek Dolgorukov-Argutinskys. Vakhtang had three sons and three daughters by Horishah. One of the three sons was Hasan Jalal whose clan had family ties with powerful houses of that time, both with the Argutinsky-Dolgorukovs and the clan of Orbeli, the rulers of Syunik [Мамедова, 2005, с.405, 408-409]. This historical note about the Artsakh-Khachen principality is given in order to remind once again that all this information was in the epigraph of the Khutavank/ Dadivank monastery at the end of the 19th century and was recorded and transmitted in the work “Artsakh” of bishop Barkhudaryants. He provides the following description: the monastery “has an old fence”, “in (663) 1214, by the order of the pious wife of prince Vakhtang, a beautiful 4 column ashlar annex was built at the monastery”; “the temple and the narthex were built by the order of Arzu-Khatun as the burial vault of the Vakhtang clan”; “the bell tower was built on the same ancient, narrow and elongated monastery founded in the name of Apostle Date and later repeatedly restored. Bishop Gregory (16th century) built a church on 4 columns not far from these monasteries”. In the 12th century, “the abbot of the monastery was the son of prince Vakhtang, bishop Gregory” [Бархударянц, II, с.215-219]. The epigraph of the Khutavank/ Dadivank monastery read: “By the will of God, me, Hasan, the son of Vakhtang, the owner of Haterk and Khanabert, Khachenabert and

Khavkakhagats, had been the ruler for 40 years, defeated my enemies in many wars, and had 6 sons; I gave them my fortresses and my land and came to this monastery to my brother Gregory and I became a monk ...in 631 (1182)” [Бархударянц, II, с.215]. The epigraph also indicated the names of the Albanian ruling nobility: “the queen and Hasan’s wife, the daughter of king Kiurike ...631 (1182); Arzu-Khatun, the daughter of the Great prince of princes Kurd and the wife of prince Vakhtang, the ruler of Haterk and the entire Upper Khachen and their children Hasan, Gregory (1214); Mamka, wife of Hasan, and son Gregory and his wife Aspa 761 (1312)” [Бархударянц, II, с.215-217]. It also mentioned the abbots and catholicos buried in this monastery – Zakharias, Atanas, Gregory [Бархударянц, ч.II, с.218] and indicated the lands donated by the Albanian ruling nobility over the centuries to this Albanian temple [Бархударянц, II, с.215-221].

Thanks to the Great Victory of Azerbaijan in the Patriotic War of 2020, one of the descendant peoples of the Albanians, the Christian Udis, gained the opportunity to make pilgrimages to this Albanian temple of their ancestors.



The Dadivank/Khutavank monastery

Near the Dadivank/Khutavank monastery, the **Khavkakhagats fortress (Lachin gaya) was built** [Бархударянц, II, с.223].

We should also mention **the ruins of the 13th century Mshakhani monastery** of Holy Mother of God, which is a small church with a chapel [Бархударянц, II, с.222], and the 12th century **Theotokos monastery** consisting of 20 structures and located 3 km to the west, at the foot of the hill, on the right bank of the Tartar.

The 13th century Khatravank Monastery was built southeast of the Khudavank/Dadivank monastery and consisted of a church, chapel and living premises.

The Khatra fortress was located opposite the western side of the monastery of the same name, with the **Itarin fortress** castle near it [Бархударянц, II, с.205-207, 210-211]. Below the monastery, **a bridge** was built in the 13th century. [Бархударянц, II, с.207].

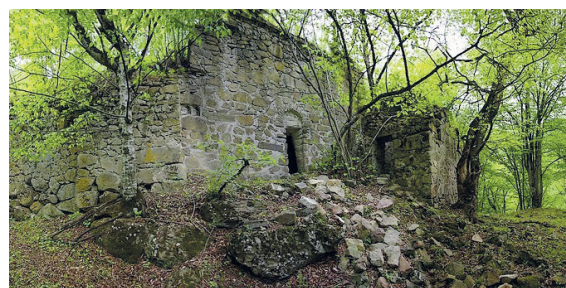
The village of Hasanriz (Aterk) was founded on the left side of the Tartar River at the eastern foot of the mountain, where meliks built a **residence fortress** in the 12th–13th centuries, with the **Church of the Holy Mother of God** in the center of the village. In the vicinity of the village there were: the ruins of **the Church of the Holy Sign (Surb Nshan)**; to the north–east of Aterk – **the Akana fortress**, to the south–east of the village – the ruins of 3 churches of the 12th century; in the vicinity of Aterk – the **Itskar** and **Kolen** monasteries; in the western part of Aterk – the **Berdakar fortress** referred to by Mkhitar Gosh as “the Aterk castle”; as well as the **Astgablur chapel**, **the Karakhunch church**, the ruins of the **Masis chapel**, the ruins of the **Shukavank monastery**, the ruins of the **Karanlukhdere church (Mtnadzor)** [Бархударянц, II, с.211-213, 224].

The village of Chapar is known for **the Akarakaberd fortress** built 3 km away from it and **the Surb Minas church** located to the north–west; 8 km away from the village is **the Karmir Kari Vank monastery** (12th–13th centuries) [Бархударянц, II, с.214]. In Charekdar, there was **a monastery of the Holy Mother of God** (11th–12th centuries).

The ruins of the 13th century **Mayrakahag/Tiramayr monastery** are located in the center of Gozlu (Vagauz), with ruins of churches in the vicinity, and 3 km from it is the 13th century **Karmirvank monastery** consisting of a church, a narthex, a chapel and cells [Бархударянц, II, с.234].

At the foot of the gorge stretching from east to west (from the chapel towards the gorge), there is a big two-entrance fortress. The western entrance was at the foot of a deep gorge, almost touching the right tributary of the Tartar; on other sides, there are natural impregnable cliffs. The fortress had two towers and a building with three towers, consisting of 2 large rooms. The southern parts were allocated

for baths, oil mills. The second meliks’ palace was built at the eastern entrance (15 rooms, stoves, fireplaces, 2 balconies), with a church and a stable nearby [Бархударянц, II, с.234-236].



Karmirvank monastery

The Hamam church was built near the village of **Garnakar**, south of Gandzasar, in the gorge of the same name (11 c.).

The village of Yayidzhi (Gochogot) had 3 churches, one of which was called **Karmir Yekhtsi**, dating back to the 7th century.

The name of the Aghdaban village is believed to be associated with the Albanians.

Kalbajar district had the following Albanian **fortresses**: Jomard fortress in the village of Jomard, **the Keshikchi** fortress in the village of Jamishli, **Keshikchi** in the village of Gamishli, the 13th century Ulukhan fortress in the village of Garajanli, Galaboyun fortress in the village of Galaboyun, another one in the village of Chaplar; and the **Albana church** at the confluence of the Tartar and the Bulanig rivers.

The Great Victory of Azerbaijan in the Patriotic War of 2020 provides researchers with the opportunity to study in detail the Albanian heritage of the entire Karabakh, Tartar and Kalbajar districts in particular, and to make a more accurate list of the Albanian antiquities that have survived to date.

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Gandzasar monastery



The Dadivank/Khutavank monastery

Mammadova Leyla

*Academic Secretary, U. Hajibeyli Baku Academy of Music,
Choral Conducting Chair Professor, PhD in Art Studies*

THE ALBANIAN PERIOD IN GALIB MAMMADOV'S WORKS

Galib Hasan oglu Mammadov (19.04.1946, Ganja) is a famous Azerbaijani composer who has been living in Norway since 2002. His personality as a composer was formed under the influence of the leading Azerbaijani composers, including Fikret Amirov, Gara Garayev, Jovdat Hajiyev, and Khayyam Mirzazadeh. From the very beginning, G.Mammadov inherited from them, apart from a wonderful school, the desire for knowledge, the ability to think deeply over the task set, creative self-criticism, and extraordinary modesty.

Here is a quote from an interview (dated 05.04.2013) of the author with Khayyam Mirzazadeh who in those years worked at the Academy of Music and at the Conservatory: *"It was by my advice that G.Mammadov joined G.Garayev's class. Knowing well his creative potential, I believed that with such a background one should only learn from G.Garayev. In fact, G.Mammadov is by nature a very delicate, graceful musician. The intonations he used were very fresh for that time, the harmonic language was interesting, corresponding to melodic thinking. The picturesqueness of G.Mammadov's music is very light, meaningful, and interesting. All this gave me the right to recommend him to G.Garayev"*. These qualities became the distinguishing feature of G.Mammadov.

During his studies at the Conservatory, G.Mammadov proved to be a promising composer, and his thesis, i.e. the vocal-symphonic cycle "Seven Bayatis" (1974) for mezzo-soprano, tenor and symphony orchestra, was a great success.

G.Mammadov is the author of a number of remarkable pieces including: "Allegro" for string quartet (1974); "Parvana" (1975) for chamber orchestra (1977); "Uzeyir dastani" for string orchestra (1977); Piano Sonata dedicated to Heinrich von Kleist (1979) [9]; Pastoral for Symphony Orchestra (1979); Miniatures for chamber orchestra (1981); "Elegy" in memory of Gara Garayev" (1982); choreographic

sketch "Nushaba and Alexander", inspired by Nizami Ganjavi (1983), later, in 1985, he completed the "Treasury of Secrets" ballet; 7 pieces for piano for children (1983); "Children's Album" for chamber orchestra (1984); "Waltz" for chamber orchestra (1988); song cycle "Psalms of David" (in English) for mezzo-soprano, bass and chamber orchestra (1992); *a cappella* Psalms 39 and 52 (1994); 40 Psalms for the Lutheran community in Baku (2013); vocal and choral cycle "Landet vi kommer fra" (1997); cantata for choir, reciter, soloist and chamber ensemble "Summerland" to words by E.Skeie (first performed in Oslo City Hall); "Ilahilar" (2003); music for theatrical pieces "Molla Nasreddin", "Javad Khan", "The Ash-Boy" (1997, 1999, 1998); music for movie "Haray, Khojali" (1993); chamber instrumental compositions; a number of piano pieces; romances and songs to the verses of Azerbaijani and foreign poets; choirs and choral arrangements of Azerbaijani folk songs [Мамедова, 2020, с.32-40], and many others.

It should be especially noted that in 1984, G.Mammadov deciphered nine Azerbaijani mugams performed by the outstanding Azerbaijani tar player Bakhram Mansurov: "Mahur-Hindi", "Shushtar", "Segah", "Bayati-Shiraz", "Bayati-Isfahan", "Bayati-Kurd", "Navaa", "Choban-Bayati" and "Chahargah" [Гаджибеков, 1957].

Thanks to him, the composer acquired great knowledge in professional music of the oral tradition of Azerbaijan, which he further skillfully applied in his works.

We should say that at the end of the 80s, in 1988–1989, the music of the ballet "Treasury of Secrets" interested the outstanding ballet dancer, choreographer, theater director, actor and teacher, People's Artist of the USSR Vladimir Vasilyev. He was going to stage this ballet in America, in Baku and even in one of the Arab countries. *"Galib Hasan oglu's music cannot but captivate numerous*

spectators. I regard him as a talented composer with a delicate soul and emotionality... [which in combination. – L.M.] will create a very interesting work for the theater”, he wrote in his letter to an American producer. Unfortunately, due to certain circumstances, the ballet was not staged.

An important role in G.Mammadov's creative biography was played by the “Two Prayers to Zoroaster and Krishna” for piano, voice (khananda) and audio tape, with Indian flute recording, created by him in 1987. G.Mammadov finds interesting points of coincidence between Indian raga Bhopali and Azerbaijani mugam Rast. The concept and structure of the composition reflect the inner world of the composer at that time, based on the study of many metaphysical ideas, in an attempt to clarify the fundamental concepts with which people perceive the world, i.e. existence, objects and their properties, space and time, cause, effect, and the probability of events, the connection of cultures and peoples. The work was created as a reflection of the kind of associations that were coming to the author during meditation.

Jovdat Hajiyev highly appreciated this work of G.Mammadov, warmly supporting the idea of interconnection of many cultures. It was this creative success that inspired G.Mammadov to expand the concept and create the second edition (2002). In addition, such a synthesis of arts – Culturmix – became the basis of G.Mammadov's style in subsequent years. And while in this work he draws the audience's attention to the similarity of Indian raga and Azerbaijani mugam, he is further interested in the closeness between Norwegian folk instrumental tunes, slått, and ancient Azerbaijani song themes, and the history of music of Ancient Albania, etc.

In 1999, a new stage in the composer's work begins, which can be referred to as the “Albanian period”. At the beginning of this period, G.Mammadov wrote a concert piece “Allegro Albana” for a chamber orchestra. The author himself considers this work to be one of his best works. Interestingly, the first sketches of “Allegro Albana” were made on the road, on the train from his home

Ganja to Baku. The entire work is permeated with a joyful, spring mood. The work was completed in summer, when the composer was resting in the village of Kish near Shaki, together with the family of the talented Azerbaijani artist Ujal Hagverdiyev. At that time, a dilapidated Albanian church was being restored in Kish and the two men spent a lot of time together talking about the fate of the world, about the history of Azerbaijan.

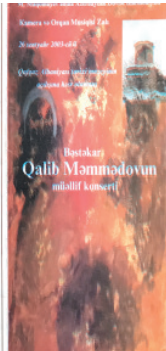


As is known, the temple in Kish is often referred to as the Mother of Churches in the South Caucasus. This version is supported by radiocarbon archaeological analysis initiated by, among others, the famous Norwegian traveler and ethnographer Thor Heyerdahl who visited this church in 2000.

During the rule of the President of Azerbaijan and the National Leader of the World's Azerbaijanis Heydar Aliyev, in 2000–2003, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway financed a joint project of the Azerbaijan University of Architecture and Construction and the Norwegian Humanitarian Society for archaeological research and restoration of the church in Kish. It should be noted that G. Mammadov took an active part in the restoration of this Albanian church as an Azerbaijani culture and restoration adviser for the Norwegian Humanitarian Society and the government of Norway.

The ancient history of Albania caught G.Mammadov's deep interest and it was not by chance that he created several works.

To come back to “Allegro Albana”, we should note that the work was written specifically for the



State Chamber Orchestra of Azerbaijan and is dedicated to its artistic director Teymur Goychayev.

The next work of the "Albanian" period by G.Mammadov is "Oratorium Albanum" which can be safely called a musical monument of the history of Azerbaijan. In 2000, G.Mammadov created a large-scale composition for mixed and children's choir, symphony orchestra, organ, kemenche and soloists. For the first time, the oratorio was performed on September 26, 2003, at the composer's recital in the Chamber and Organ Hall of Baku, which was timed to coincide with the opening of the History Museum of Caucasian Albania in Azerbaijan. The oratorio was performed by the U.Hajibeyli Azerbaijan State Symphony Orchestra under the baton of Rauf Abdullayev and the State Choir Capella the artistic director of which is Gulbaji Imanova. The kemenche solo was performed by Elshan Mansurov. It was a remarkable and unforgettable recital of Galib Mammadov. In the hall, there was an exhibition of paintings by the remarkable artist Namiq Mammadov, which were also used in the concert.

"Oratorium Albanum" is one of the largest choral works of modern times in Azerbaijan. Primarily, the author intended to write the "Mass of Fire" at the turn of the 20th-21st centuries. He wanted to name it *"The Mystery of Jesus Christ"* (which, finally, is the title of the last fifth part of the oratorio). However, as he was working on the libretto, he somewhat rethought the composition.

The originality of the oratorio is due to the introduction of kemenche, a leading instrument of Azerbaijani professional oral art – the centuries-old mugam trio – along with tar and daf (frame drum), into the large symphony orchestra. In addition, to make the images of the oratorio more vivid and expressive and render them realistically, the author uses a children's choir performing together with a mixed choir. Finally, the theme chosen by the composer - the unity of peoples, cultural proximity, universal human values - gives a special originality to the work. The theme of the work is disclosed in five parts, the texts are written in Latin, which at that time was an innovation in the Azerbaijani choral music of the oratorio genre. The libretto was written by Norwegian writer and poet Eyvind Skeie.

The oratorio is dedicated to the history of the motherland – now one of the most advanced countries of the Muslim East – Azerbaijan, and stretches back to the distant past, to the era of antiquity, when the Albanian state existed on the territory of this land, where Christianity was also professed.

The concept of "Oratorium Albanum" is based on the presentation of the history of Azerbaijan, since ancient times known as "the land of fires", with quotations from the Bible about "unquenchable fire" rethought according to this situation. According to the composer's idea, the music was to convey to listeners, regardless of their nationality, the historical significance of Caucasian Albania not only in the history of Azerbaijan, but also in the entire South Caucasus.

"Oratorium Albanum" is one of the brightest compositions not only in G.Mammadov's works, but generally in all Azerbaijani choral music. Work on comprehending the extremely complex inner image of the composition and revealing its character in the most detailed and deep psychological aspects was perhaps the most important and most difficult

task. G.Mammadov understood the complexity of this task, but his inner flair, professionalism, the harmony of thought and feeling, refined creative intuition and out-of-the-box thinking eventually led to the creation of a very significant choral opus [Алиева, 1990].

And the composer was focused on the need to preserve and consolidate the continuity of times and generations, interconnection of cultures and the unity of peoples. And it must be admitted that Galib Mammadov was not mistaken. “Oratorium Albanum” can be called the pinnacle of G.Mammadov’s creation [Мамедова, 2016, с.64-81; Мамедова, 2016a].

Continuing the Albanian theme, in parallel with the work on the Oratorium, G.Mammadov created “Ilahilar”, which was performed at the opening of the restored Albanian church in Kish in 2003, right in the church. The work is in the form of a bayati and is a theatrical folk tale. According to G.Mammadov, it shows the rich spiritual palette of the Azerbaijani people coming from our history and culture, open to different forms of meditation, as special forms of deep reflection (recall that the word “meditation” in different contexts means “to think over”, “meditate”, “develop ideas”).

The composition was performed by the instrumental-vocal trio of Azerbaijan State Theater “YUG” (headed by art director Vaqif Gasanov). Instrumental accompaniment was played by ancient Azerbaijani instruments – ney, oud, saz, and ghaval.

It was a kind of musical theater, where the author intended to show, in parallel with musical material, elements of the ancient culture of prayer, ancient rituals using “aroma” (burning grass called “uzerlik”, i.e. Peganum harmala), ancient copper plates which, when touched with various objects, made unusual vibrating mystical sounds, and the sound of water pouring from a jug. Candles were lit to symbolize the time dedicated to prayer. Using certain smells and sounds, the composer strove to recreate a special atmosphere of the sacrament of ancient religious rites and prayers, elements of which have survived to this day in oral folk art, in particular among ashigs. It is no coincidence that all this was embodied in a form close to dastan. This is the author’s idea of Albanian Christianity.

In 2002, G.Mammadov wrote a cantata for children titled “Drömmenes Fjell” (“The Mountain of Dreams”) set to the words of E.Skeie. This cantata is also about Ancient Albania. In view of the fact that the Norwegian government took an active part in the restoration work of the Albanian church in Kish, they wanted to convey the history of Albanian Christianity to their citizens in a popular form. They considered the most popular form for this to be a children’s television program. The cantata premiered in Ulsteinvik, Norway. It was attended by about 200 children from all over Norway. In general, the cantata was written for children’s choir, actors and soloists (5 adult characters), and a chamber orchestra. “Drömmenes Fjell” is a great success and has been shown on Norwegian television several times.

In conclusion, I would like to say that Galib Mammadov is a talented composer with out-of-the-box thinking, whose every work features a striking and very convincing artistic image. The composer has complete mastery over the rich palette of timbre colors, finely thought-out nuances,



Albanian church in Kish. 2003



refined creative intuition, laconic writing, and therefore he is an excellent miniaturist. At the same time, commonplace solutions are not characteristic of him; he is looking for his own ways, his own individual approach to the listener. Let us also pay attention to the fact that he is extremely demanding of himself and self-critical. The frankness, sincerity, and spiritual purity of G.Mammadov as a person are predeterminedly manifested in his works. Due to this, all his compositions easily penetrate into the soul of every listener and capture the entire wide audience, conquering the hearts of both music lovers, as well as sophisticated professional musicians.



G.Mammadov's creative potential is huge. His practical activities, the mainstream of which is aimed at the need to preserve and consolidate the integrity of times and generations, the interrelation between cultures and peoples convincingly prove the deep humanism and meaningfulness of his work.

The world of G.Mammadov's artistic images, which distinguishes him from his contemporaries, is represented by a kind of extraordinary concepts, a multicolored variety of timbres and very sincere, unclouded emotional colors. All his work is characterized not so much by the world as by his ability to perceive the world.

Intuition suggests that the composer will soon return to the Albanian theme, especially since there is a wonderful reason.



After the Great Victory of Azerbaijan in the Second Karabakh War, Karabakh and, among a number of Albanian temples, the ancient Albanian monastery complex Khutavank (6th–13th centuries) near the Azerbaijani village of Veng, Kalbajar district, were liberated from the invaders. All these years, Armenians have been falsely presenting the temple to the whole world as an ancient Armenian church. Finally, after 30 years of occupation, the Udi people of Azerbaijan returned to the walls of their Temple of God. The Udis are the only ethnos that inherited Christianity from the ancient Caucasian Albania.



The Azerbaijani people have always been tolerant. No nation or people living on its territory has ever suffered any oppression. And the creative community of Azerbaijan - composers, writers, poets, artists – are equally loved and respected by everyone. Galib Mammadov has special friendly relations with representatives of the Albanian-Udi Christian community living in Azerbaijan. And we hope that he will more than once make all admirers of his talent happy with new works, and the Albanian period in his work is not yet over.

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Сайтография: <http://www.galibgasan.com>



Rzayeva Saltanat

*Teacher at the Department of Design and Applied Arts,
Azerbaijan State University of Culture and Arts, PhD in Art History*

TYPOLOGY OF PRE-CHRISTIAN PICTORIAL SYMBOLS OF CAUCASIAN ALBANIA

Symbols on the monuments of history and art, found in the territory of Azerbaijan and dating back to the 4th century BC–3rd century AD, are a valuable source for studying the typology of pre-Christian pictorial symbols of Caucasian Albania. Undoubtedly, they were used as carriers and transmitters of information and therefore are of great importance in the study of ancient history. Thus, a symbol serves as a key allowing us to read about the worldviews of the inhabitants of Caucasian Albania.

A huge number of symbols on petroglyphs, ceramics, bronze and other items have been found in Azerbaijan. Most of the images were carefully studied by such Azerbaijani archaeologists, historians, and art historians as S.M.Kaziyev, I.M.Jafarzadeh, T.I.Golubkina, R.M.Vahidov, O.Sh.Ismizadeh, D.N.Rustamov, F.M.Muradova, J.A.Khalilov, I.G.Narimanov, F.L.Osmanov, A.B.Badalov, A.I.Alekperov, G.O.Goshgarly, I.Babayev, G.Jabiyev, G.M.Aslanov, N.I.Rzayev, R.Efendi, N.V.Guluzadeh, F.S.Khalilli, G.K.Akhundova and others.

This study is relevant because the pictorial symbols that existed in the 4th century BC – 3rd century AD in the territory of Caucasian Albania have not yet been the object of a dedicated typological study. Scientists have studied symbols within a specific geographic area, time period, type of product, and material.

In this study, the image types were chosen as a decisive parameter for classification. They are divided into anthropomorphic, **astral, geometric, zoomorphic, floral, polymorphic images, as well as stamps and signs**. In addition, an attempt was made to clarify the semantic meaning of the symbols under study. Due to the large scope of this topic, we included studies in which their semantics was considered based on historical, archaeological, art history, ethnographic literature, and folklore data [Pzayeva, 2011, 2013, 2015, 2019], as well as the

studies of symbols on items found by archaeologists in recent years.

According to the method of representation, all symbols are divided into graphic two-dimensional and plastic three-dimensional images. The two-dimensional images include both individual images and those in compositions.

Anthropomorphic symbols. Graphic compositional images, depending on the subject, are subdivided into hunting, battle, cult and unidentified themes.

1. **Hunting** is the most ancient and widespread theme among the rock paintings of Gobustan, which reflects the hunting cult. There are the following subtypes: *foot hunter* [Cəfərzadə, 1999, c.194, рис.10,13,14], *hunting rider* [Ахундова, 2020, табл. XIX, рис.10; Cəfərzadə, 1999, c.178, рис.4] and *a man wrestling a lion* [Бабаев, 2010, c.19; Ахундова, 2020, табл. XXX, рис.5, 9].

2. **The battle theme** – a scene of a battle between a rider and a foot soldier is depicted on a pendant seal [Ахундова, 2020, c.66].

3. **Cult themes** with the following plots: *priests in front of the fire altar* [Pzayev, 1976, рис.166]; *a man in front of the tree of life* [Ахундова, 2020, табл. XVIII, рис.1]; *a man in an orant posture next to an animal* [Cəfərzadə, 1999, c.154, p.11], *with a star* [Qaziyev, 1953, табл. II, рис.1] and *a phallic scene* [Pzayev, 1964, рис.79].

4. There are **antique themes** on rings [Ахундова, 2020, c.93, табл. XVIII, рис.6].

5. **Unidentified themes** include images that have been preserved as fragments or non-distinct images [Azərbaycanda arxeoloji tədqiqatlar 2015–2016, c.253, рис.12].

Plastic images of people, found in Azerbaijan can be divided into **monumental stone sculptures, chamber sculptures** made of limestone, clay, bronze, as well as **anthropomorphic vessels and figurines** on ceramics.

Chamber sculptures. There are two types of plastic anthropomorphic symbols:

Type 1. Half-length figurines (1 piece) [Azərbaycan Antropomorf terrakotlar. Kataloq¹, 2010, рис.52].

Type 2. Full-length standing figurines that are subdivided into two types.

2a) Figurines with distinctly visible legs (Fig. 1) [AAt. Kataloq, 2010, рис.2, 3, 8-23, 26-31, 33-44, 51; Алекперов, 1994, табл.III, рис.1, 2, табл.IV, рис.4, табл.VI, рис.5, табл.VII, рис.1-3, табл.VIII, рис.5; Бадалов, 2003, табл.XXI, рис.2]. The largest group includes **49** pieces. Female terracotta figurines of the antique period of this type, as a rule, are depicted standing, naked, with a necklace of several rows of braided straps, bracelets, and belts. At the end of a long and upwardly thinning neck there is a faceless head (**3 pieces**), with a likeness of a face with a turban on the head and braids (**2 pieces**). Most of the terracotta figurines have a broken head, arms or legs, although sometimes whole ones are found. Some figurines are roughly modeled; others gracefully show the plasticity of the female body.

2b) figurines with conjoined legs (3 pieces), some of them have a conical base. Legs are not shown, as the lower part of the figure expands downward, possibly representing a dress or skirt. There are three female figurines in total, and none of them has a head. Two figurines were found in the village of Khynysli (Shamakhi) [AAt. Kataloq, 2010, рис.53, 60], and one in Shamakhi [Алекперов, 1994, табл.IV, рис.2, инв.№72; Бадалов, 2003, табл.XXI, рис.1, XX, рис.1; Ахундова, 2020, табл.XIII, рис.14].

We should also note the **anthropomorphic vessels** in the form of a woman (**3 pieces**) (Fig. 2) [AAt. Kataloq, 2010, рис.1, 68; Алекперов, 1994, табл.XVI, рис.4] and **vessels with anthropomorphic elements** (3 pieces) [Халилов, 1973; Алекперов, 1994, табл.I, рис.4, 6, с.34; Quluzadə, 2012, рис.19]. A fragment of a vessel from Nargizava in the form of a head with several rows of plaits, based on the similarity with similar female heads, is considered female.

There is a group of **figurines with no sex characteristics (17 pieces)**: *undamaged* [AAt. Kataloq, 2010, рис.24, 25, 32, 47, 65; Алекперов, 1994, табл.II, рис.2, IV, рис.6] and *fragments* [AAt. Kataloq, 2010, рис.4, 5, 46, 59, 63; Алекперов,

1994, табл.IX, рис.1, III, рис.3, 4, IX, рис.3, V, рис.4, II, рис.5]. There is a fragment of the head found in Molla-Isakli, an analogue of which is found on a whole figurine of a woman; therefore, we can assume that this head was also on a female figurine. [AAt. Kataloq, 2010, рис.59].

Another group includes **fragments of figurines (15 pieces)** whose sex can be determined, including 11 fragments of *female figurines* [AAt. Kataloq, 2010, рис.6, 7, 49; Алекперов, 1994, табл.VII, рис.4, 6, 8, VI, рис.7, II, рис.6, IX, рис.4; Kərimov, Əliyev 2011, с.208; Quliyev, Xəlilli 2009, с.223] and 4 *men's heads* [Алекперов, 1994, табл.I, рис.5, V, рис.7; Рзаев, 1976, с.191].

In summary, **91** plastic anthropomorphic images were studied. Of these, we believe **69** (53 figurines + 3 vessels + 13 fragments (female)) figurines and vessels are female, **6** are male (fragments), and **16** are of unidentifiable sex.

Many of them have broken heads, arms and legs. However, there are **18** pieces with a head (9 female, 6 male, 3 figurines without sex characteristics). Among them, 8 are almost unbroken figurines; 2 whole ceramic items and 8 fragments.

As can be seen, most of them represent women. *Female figurines, according to A.I. Alekperov, were symbolic images of the Mother goddess and, therefore, objects of her cult used in various rituals* [Алекперов, 1994, с.63-66, 68-74; Рзаева, 2015, с.8-9,12].

In addition to the above chamber sculpture, **massive stone sculptures are found on the territory of Azerbaijan (Fig. 3)**. Such statues are not numerous due to the destruction of pagan monuments by the Zoroastrians, Christians and Muslims. Anthropomorphic stone sculptures were found near the village of Shatyrli near Barda, Shemakhi district (Khynysli, Dag Kolany, Chiragli), etc. Researchers examined them in detail [Халилов, 1985, табл. XXXVI, с.188-189; 1986, с.78-81; Геюшев, Халилов, 1986; Рзаев, 1976, рис.185-190, с.179-185; Эфенди, 1986]. The statues were carved from large tooled blocks of stone, full-length or knee-deep, many of them retained their heads. These are schematical massive, monolithic figures, with no detailed body parts and rough features of the face and body. Among them, we can see two hands positions: (I) bent at the elbow and raised up and (II) both hands

¹ Azərbaycan Antropomorf terrakotlar. Kataloq, 2010 – Aam Kataloq

are pressed to the chest, the left hand is put above the right (sometimes the right hand is located on the stomach or reaches the left side).

In History of the Albanians, Movses Kaghankatvatsi notes that these stone figures were erected in honor of powerful warriors and commanders [Эфенди, 1986]. According to J.Khalilov, "...there is information about the existence in Albania... of statues of gods and ancestors. The statues under study could as well be cult character... *Most of these statues were tombstones...*" [Халилов, 1985, с.188-189]. Among the statues found, N.Rzayev, in addition to memorial monuments, also distinguishes *cult monuments, such as a female figure from Garibli, Tovuz district* [Рзаяев, 1976, с.185]. He also suggests that *"tombstones embody the plastic images of the dead, most likely brave and noble warriors"* [Рзаяев, 1976, с.182]. This tradition is especially characteristic of ancient Turkic peoples, which many a time has been noted by researchers.

As we can see, anthropomorphic symbols took a stable place in the art of Caucasian Albania.

Astral symbols. The ancient Albanians worshiped celestial bodies depicted with various symbols on rock paintings, ceramics and metal items. This type includes symbols imitating the shape of celestial bodies (circle, star, crescent), as well as generally accepted astral symbols with different semantics – a cross, a swastika, and a spiral. Solar symbols are of several types and are the most common during the ancient period.

Circle. Archaeological findings include images of *a plain circle symbol* [Ахундова, 2020, с.54-55] and *concentric circles* [Ахундова, 2020, табл.XIV, рис.3; Халилов, 1985, табл.VII, рис.6] and *three types of a circle with outgoing rays*: 1) a circle with outgoing rays (**Fig. 4**) [Исмизаде, 1956, табл.XIV, рис.1]; 2) a circle with outgoing rays enclosed in a circle [История Азербайджана, 1958, с.74; Ахундова, 2020, табл. XII, рис.4]; 3) a circle with outgoing rays, with one or more other circles inside [Гошгарлы, 2012, табл. XXXIV, рис.5; Quluzadə, Ağayev, 2012, с.69, 72].

The star symbol is characteristic of an astral cult. There is a star with eight rays near figures of geese and deer on a ceramic vessel from Mingachevir and one with six rays next to a man's figure on a seal from Mingachevir [Рзаяев, 1964, рис.84, 86; Qaziyev, 1953, табл.II, рис.1].

The crescent symbol testifies to the cult of the Moon. It is found with the open part down on the vessels of the Yaloylutepe culture (**Fig. 5**) [Исмизаде, 1956, табл.XIV, рис.2; табл.XVII, рис.1; табл.XX, рис.2; Халилов, 1985, табл.V, рис.4; Рзаяев, 1976, рис.75].

The cross symbolizes the four cardinal points and the Sun and is found on a bead from Mingachevir next to a side-view image of a bird and also as a sign on pottery [Vahidov, 1961, табл.X, рис.19].

The swastika denotes the four cardinal points, the idea of movement, and is the symbol of the sun. There is a four-armed swastika on the basis of a cross on a bead from jar burial No. 23 and on a ring [Ахундова, 2020, табл.XVIII, рис.10].

The meaning of the **spiral**, is associated by many researchers with the Sun, as well as with the movement of life. Spiral images were found on bronze pendants (**Fig. 6**) [Quluzadə, Ağayev, 2012; Xəlilov, Aslanov, 1973, табл.II, рис.15].

Astral symbols depicted on monuments of art reflect religious cults dating back to veneration of heavenly bodies [Рзаяева, 2015, с.7, 13-14]. *The facts only confirm Strabo's information about veneration of Helios, Zeus and Selene by Albans* [Алиев, 1992, с.151-152].

Geometric symbols. Line, triangle-zigzag, rhombus-mesh.

The line was widely used in decoration of various items of Azerbaijan. Most often one or several lines bordered the throat of a vessel forming border stripes. *This symbol encircled objects, thus protecting them from evil.*

The triangle is found separately in the form of triangular earrings and connecting horizontally, turns into a zigzag ornament, one of the most common in the art of Caucasian Albania (**Fig. 7**). Bells often have triangular notches [Ахундова, 2020, табл.XVI–XVII]. *Triangle may also mean a mountain. A zigzag horizontal line has the meaning of a mountain range, and in its smoother version means flowing water and serves as an amulet.*

The rhombus is found in the art of Caucasian Albania. It can be depicted separately, connected horizontally forming a border (**Fig. 8**) (less often vertically) [Əliyev, Babayev, Hüseynova, Əliyev, 2009, с.192]. Multiple rhombuses connected with each other form a mesh pattern, such as on the seal from Mingachevir (**Fig. 9**) [Vahidov, 1961, табл.X, рис.22].

Anthropomorphic



1

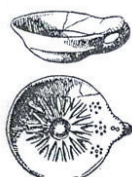


2



3

Astral



4



5



6

Geometric



7



8

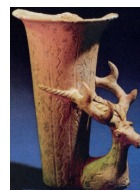


9

Zoomorphic



10



11



12

Floral



13



14

Polymorphic



15



16



17

Marks and stamps



18



19



20

The rhombus is generally understood as an early agricultural symbol associated with the cult of fertility. The mesh ornament formed by rhombi has the meaning of an amulet and a fertility booster. Therefore, the most common geometric symbols are the line, triangle-zigzag line and rhombus-mesh [Рзаева, 2015, с.13-14].

Zoomorphic symbols. These include symbols of a bird, snake, deer, horse, bull, goat, ram, predatory animals (felines, wolves, dogs) and a hare.

The bird symbol is characteristic of the art of Albania (in the form of zoomorphic vessels and decorations on vessels, signet rings) [Бабаев, 2010, с.19, 21]. Among the various symbols of birds, images of a duck and a goose prevail, and less often there is an eagle, a rooster or a peacock (**Fig. 10**) [Ахундова, 2020, табл.XV, рис.7; табл.XXXII, рис.7; Казиев, 1949, табл.IV, рис.4]. There can be compositions with waterfowl standing in front of the tree of life [Рзаев, 1964, рис.82, 84]. The duck image was also the most common on zoomorphic vessels which were later transformed into zoomorphic flasks [Рзаев, 1964, с.10; Голубкина, 1951, рис.10, 11; Бадалов, 2003, табл.XXV, рис.3].

Their images were amulets and were also associated with the cults of the Sun, fertility and funeral, as well as with Zoroastrianism [Рзаева, 2015, с.7-10].

The snake symbol was depicted crawling vertically to the top of the vessel or horizontally encircling the entire vessel [Рзаев, 1964, рис.16]. In jewelry, the image of a snake was often used to create earrings and bracelets [Ахундова, 2020, табл.XXIII, рис.2, 3; табл.XXIV, рис.2, 4, 5; табл.II, рис.9, 10].

At an early stage, a snake on various items could serve as an amulet; however, as religious views were growing more complicated, it began to be associated with the underworld and participate in the burial cult [Рзаева, 2015, с.8-10].

The deer symbol was found in the images of the deer on the rock paintings of Gobustan, ceramic vessels, a bone comb [Рзаев, 1976, рис.161], a bronze medallion and seals [Vahidov, 1961, табл.XIV, рис.4]. There are three types of bronze pendants in the shape of a deer body: 1) a deer-shaped pendant [Quluzadə, Ağayev, 2012]; 2) a pendant in the form of a ring-legged deer [Асланов, Нариманов, 1962, табл.V, рис.5,6]; 3) a pendant in the form of a

deer looking backwards [Quluzadə, Ağayev, 2012, с.63]. Archaeologists have found clay zoomorphic deer-shaped vessels of three types: 1) deer with the vessel neck on its back [Бадалов, 2003, табл.XXV, рис.1, 2,5]; 2) deer with the vessel neck on its croup [Quliyev, Əbdürəhmanov, Quluzadə, Xəlilli, 2011, с.188]; 3) rhyton (**Fig. 11**) [Голубкина, 1951, с.19, рис.29]. There are also deer body fragments [Алекперов, 1994, табл.XIV, рис.5]. There are the following graphic compositional images of a deer: 1) a procession of deer [Xəlilov, 1973, с.251-257]; 2) the scene of hunting and tearing apart [Azərbaycan arxeoloji qızıl və gümüş əşyaları, 2013, рис.143]; 3) cult scenes: a deer next to the tree of life [Рзаев, 1964, рис.13; Muradova, Rüstəmov, 1986, табл.IV, рис.2], a deer next to an orant human figure [Cəfərzadə, 1999, с.154, рис.12].

Researchers believe that the deer was a sacred animal for the ancient Albanians [Рзаев, 1964, с.11; Göyüşova, 2018, с.147-149; Ахундова, 2020, с.165-169 и др.]. Its images were associated with totemism, female deity-mother of animals, the Sun and the cult of fertility, the tree of life; they were also amulet. The tradition of depicting them continued on medieval pottery and tombstones, especially in hunting scenes [Rzayeva, 2011, с.178-208].

The symbol of horse can be found on rock paintings of Gobustan, in the form of chamber clay sculptures and bronze pendants, zoomorphic clay vessels and their details. Bronze pendants and terracotta chamber figurines of horses were found in Nargizava, Molla-Isakli, Ismayilli (**Fig. 12**) [Quluzadə, Ağayev, 2012, с.89, 91-94, 96, 97; Ахундова, 2020, табл.XV, рис.2; Алекперов, 1994, табл.XIV, рис.1, 2]. Full-height and half-height figures of a horse were used as an active decoration on vessels [Голубкина, 1951, рис.6]. Among various images, we distinguished a separate image of a horse, as well as the following scenes: *hunting* [Cəfərzadə, 1999, с.178, рис.4; Ахундова, 2020, табл.XIX, рис.10]; *battle scene* [Ахундова, 2020, табл.XIX, рис.5] and *unidentified plot* [Azərbaycanda arxeoloji tədqiqatlar 2015–2016, с.253, рис.12].

Of all domestic animals, the inhabitants of ancient Azerbaijan most revered the horse. Treating the horse as the most precious animal was due to the crucial role that the horse played in peoples' life. Its images were considered amulets, were associated with the Mother Goddess, totemism, and had a

connection with the cult of fertility, as well as with solar and burial cults [Рзаева, 2015, с.7-10].

The symbol of the bull in various images was found in the form of chamber terracotta figurines, a clay rhyton, and fragments of vessels and bronze pendants [Ахундова, 2020, с.170; Рзаев, 1976, рис.7; Алекперов, 1994, с.42; Quluzadə, Ağayev, 2012, с.85, 86]. *The bull symbol is associated with a male deity, the Moon, totemism, fertility; the bull was also a sacrificial animal* [Рзаева, 2015, с.7,9,10].

The goat symbol was most often depicted on the petroglyphs of Gobustan of different periods, including the ancient period [Cəfərzadə, 1999, с.145, рис.2; с.149, рис.8; с.193, рис.2,4,5]. A fragment of a clay board from Gazakh bears an image of a goat in front of the tree of life [Muradova, Rüstəmov, 1986, табл.IV, рис.2]. There are clay chamber sculptures of a goat [Алекперов, 1994, табл.XV, рис.9, 10, 15], as well as a zoomorphic vessel [Голубкина, 1951, рис.28]. *The goat symbol is a symbol of the Sun, totem, fertility, spring, abundance and prosperity of the vital forces of nature. It has a connection with water and tree, and protects from the evil eye* [Рзаева, 2015, с.7-9].

The ram symbol. Ceramic vessels of Caucasian Albania were often decorated with images of a ram. Among the vessels with figurines and half-figurines of various animals, vessels with plastic images of a ram are predominant. There are handles and spouts of vessels in the form of a ram's body or its parts, as well as a bracelet with ends in the form of heads of rams or aurochs [Голубкина, 1951, рис.5, 15, 16, 17, 26, 32, 34; Рзаев, 1964, рис.20, 80; Алекперов, 1994, табл.XV, рис.17; табл.III, рис.5; табл.XIV, рис.6; Ахундова, 2020, табл.XXIV, рис.3]. This symbol is also found on the silver plate from Lankaran [Кошкарлы, 1985, рис.3а].

The ram was a totem, was associated with the Sun, water and fertility; it was sacrificed in various rituals [Рзаева, 2015, с.7, 9-10].

Feline symbols were found both in the form of sculptures [Əfəndi 2001; Рзаев 1976, рис.192] and in graphic images [Vahidov, 1961, табл.XIV, p.7]. The compositions include *the scene of the fight of a man with a lion* [Бабаев, 2010, с.19; Ахундова, 2020, табл.XXX, рис.5, 9] and *the scene of hunting and violence* [Cəfərzadə, 1999, с.169, рис.5].

The predator feline symbol is associated with totemism and a solar cult, and it also played the role

of a guard on the depicted objects [Рзаева, 2015, с.7-9].

The dog symbol. Individual images of a dog are found on the rock paintings of Gobustan [Cəfərzadə, 1999, с.147], on rings [Ахундова, 2020, табл.XVIII, рис.2] and also in the form of a chamber sculpture [Алекперов, 1994, табл.XIII, рис.4, табл.XV, рис.12; Бадалов, 2003, табл.XXVII, рис.5]. A dog figurine decorates some ceramic vessels [Голубкина, 1951, рис.7; Рзаев, 1964, рис.8; 64; Хəlilov, 1973, с.251-257]. There are the following compositions with a hunting scene: 1) *man hunting with a dog* [Cəfərzadə, 1999, с.194, p.10]; 2) *hunting down and tearing to pieces* [Cəfərzadə, 1999, с.252, рис.14,15]; 3) *battle* [Cəfərzadə, 1999, с.227, рис.1, 2]. *Considering that the dog is first of all a guardian animal, its images on vessels and other objects performed the same functions, i.e. guarded the contents of the vessel, the owner from evil spirits and from the evil eye* [Рзаева, 2015, с.9-10].

The pictorial **symbols of the hare** are occasionally found in the art of ancient Azerbaijan [Бадалов, 2003, табл.XXVII, рис.1; İsmizadə, 1959, рис.5].

In various mythopoetic traditions, the symbols of birds and animals act as an indispensable element of the religious and mythological system of rituals, which has various functions. First of all, they were totems, eventually becoming the embodiment of the soul, demiurge and deity, his assistant or attribute. Their semantics changed in accordance with changes in the religious views.

Floral symbols. These include *a conventional naturalistic representation of a tree* (Fig. 13) [Рзаев, 1964, рис.82, 84, 86; Бадалов, 2003, табл.XXVI, рис.1; Халилов, 1985, табл.V, рис.2], *palmette* [Muradova, Rüstəmov, 1986, табл.IV, рис.2]; *rosace*. The *rosace* is of two types: a circle with outstretched petals (Fig. 14) [Ахундова, 2020, табл.XVII, рис.13, с.114] and a circle surrounded by other circles [Исмизаде, 1956, табл.XV, рис.1, 2, 8; Ахундова, 2020, табл.VIII, рис.16]. *The tree represented the concept of the three-dimensional structure of the Universe. A flower-shaped rosace is considered to be a symbol of the Sun. Floral symbols reflected the cult of vegetation widespread in the territory of Azerbaijan of the period under study, which was associated with the cult of the Mother Goddess* [Рзаева, 2015, с.8,18].

Polymorphic symbols. In the art of Caucasian Albania, there are polymorphic symbols that combine different characteristics (graphic and plastic). Graphic polymorphic symbols include: *winged man* [Ахундова, 2020, табл. XXX, рис. 4], *winged dog* [Рзаев, 1976, с. 247, рис. 169; Бабаев, 2010, с. 19], *griffin with an eagle's head of and a lion's body* (Fig. 15) and *centaur* [Ахундова, 2020, табл. XVIII, рис. 7, 6; Кошкарлы, 1985, табл. XI, рис. 128].

Polymorphic plastic images can be divided into three types:

Type 1. Half-length figurines (busts) (5 pieces) [ААт. Kataloq, 2010, рис. 54-56, 58]; a similar bust figurine with a broken head can be categorized as one of them [ААт. Kataloq, 2010, рис. 57];

Type 2. Full-length figurines that are subdivided into two categories.

Category 1. Seated figurines: a) leg-shaped; b) squatting.

1a) the statuette has a big-nosed head on a neck thickening towards the base, which immediately passes into the hips, and the legs are spread apart, the feet are partially broken off [ААт. Kataloq, 2010, рис. 64]. Such figurines are referred to as leg-shaped and they are mainly in a half-sitting position. [Антонова, 1977, с. 37];

2b) Of particular interest are 2 similar silver polymorphic fibulae from Mingachevir and Shamakhi (Fig. 16) [Azərbaycan arxeoloji qızıl və gümüş əşyaları 2013, с. 64; Ахундова, 2020, с. 108; Cəbiyev, 2019, с. 127]. This is a plastic image of a child bearing woman in a seated position, whose body is formed from three birds holding a human head in their beaks. We wrote in a separate publication about the connection of this figurine with polymorphic terracotta figurines, its analogs on Azerbaijani carpets, and its artistic and semantic meaning. [Рзаева, 2019, с. 96-109].

Category 2. Standing figurines are of two subcategories:

2a) Figurines with distinctly visible legs (**5 pcs**): all figurines have a small head on a neck thickening downwards, no ears or mouth, a nose like a bird's beak, and legs broken below the hips (Fig. 17) [Osmanov, 1982, с. 91, табл. XVII, рис. 3; ААт. Kataloq, 2010, рис. 49; Рзаева, 2013, табл. II, рис. 10, 23];

2b) figurines with conjoined legs and a conic base that resembles a dress or skirt (**5 pcs**) [ААт. Kataloq, 2010, рис. 62, 66; Османов, 2006, с. 151; Бадалов, 2003, с. 82, табл. XXIII, рис. 1, XXI, рис. 3].

In 2019, a female standing figurine was found in Nargizava. "The woman has long braids, a flat nose, round eyes, and a necklace made by molding. On the bottom of the figurine, there is a hole to attach it to a cane. Obviously, the figurine was used in religious rites" [<https://azertag.az/xeber/Nergizava...>]. We would add that it is completely similar in type to the figurines from Gyrlar-Tepe and the village of Nuran, Agsu District. It is particularly interesting that it could be fixed on a rod.

Type 3. Anthropomorphic female vessels (2 pcs): the sculptures have eyes, hair, a necklace, a nose, and no mouth and ears [ААт. Kataloq, 2010, рис. 70; Алекперов, 1994, табл. XVI, рис. 2].

Fragments. We should distinguish figurines with preserved parts of the body, which are of two varieties with pronounced sexual characters (**1 pcs.**) [ААт. Kataloq, 2010, рис. 51] and without them (**5 pcs**) [ААт. Kataloq, 2010, рис. 67, 61, 45; Рзаева, 2013, табл. II, рис. 19; Əfəndi, 2001, с. 28]. One fragment is a head similar to that on a female figurine from Nuran.

Exploring anthropomorphic plastic images of the Albanian period, namely terracotta figurines, their polymorphic character was discovered, which consists in a combination of a *bird's head* and a *human body* [Рзаева, 2013, с. 280-292]. The following **typological features** of this polymorphic image were found: 1) a neck, thick at the base and thinning upwards, forms a disproportionately small head; 2) lack of a clear division into the head, neck, shoulders; 3) the obligatory presence of a nose; 4) lack of ears; 5) no mouth.

Seven sculptures have a female breast (in one of them the breast is not shown, but the sculpture has wide hips characteristic of women). The nose is a hook-shaped molding in the form of a clearly shaped bird's beak, or moldings of various sizes and shapes. For the most part, these noses are completely atypical of a human face, since a human nose is narrow in the upper part and expanding downward. However, in these figurines, the noses are wide at the base and taper downward, which is similar to the shape of a bird's beak.

So, 26 figurines (23 terracotta, 1 bronze and 2 silver fibulae) are polymorphic and the predominance of feminine features in the hybrid image under study indicates its feminine nature. Plastic and pictorial images of the bird goddess

are often found in ancient cultures of different countries. M. Gimbutas first described the image of the bird goddess and illustrated her with numerous terracotta sculptures of the 6th–4th millennium BC found in Europe [Гимбутас, 2006, с.251-258]. It is obvious that the figurines found in Caucasian Albania confirm the existence here, as well as in other regions of the ancient world, of the cult of the Mother Goddess with ornithomorphic features. She was considered the giver of fertility, and the mistress of life and death.

However, in recent years, new unbroken terracotta and bronze figurines have been found, whose polymorphism lies in the combination of the features of the frog-man and the snake-man. Since we are not aware of any publications about them, we will provide a full description of them. In Azerbaijan Museum of Archeology and Ethnography, there is one of the largest terracotta female figures dating back to the Antique period. This is a standing figure with arms raised up, about 30 cm high. Unlike the figures described above, she has no nose, but has a slightly stretched open mouth. Her eyes are marked with circular indentations on the sides of the figurine's head. On the neck and on one arm, there are thick and rounded plaits, depicting a necklace in 4 rows and bracelets. Her breasts are elongated. In her front, along the entire body, there are three vertical rows of shallow depressions. The head resembles the head of a hybrid - half-snake, half-frog.

Another terracotta female figurine is exhibited in the Azerbaijan State Art Museum. This is a standing figure with arms outstretched sidewise. It has no nose or mouth, and its eyes are marked with holes. Its head resembles the head of a snake. The neck is decorated with 12 rows of molded rings thinning towards the top. The back of the figurine is flat which means that its makers did not mean to show it from the back. Interestingly, there are holes in place of its hands so that it could be fixed anywhere. There are rows of bracelets on its wrists. There are circles cut on the open surface of the body. The breasts are distinct and there are three large moldings on the shoulders and above the abdomen. The idea of the connection of female figurines with the snake was put forth by D.A. Akhundov, but he considered necklaces and bracelets to be snakes [Ахундов, 1986, с.143-147]. We assume that the image of a snake could be presented by the image of

a snake's head on a woman's body. M.Gimbutas also described the image of the snake goddess [Гимбутас, 2006, с.258-260].

Unique bronze polymorphic sexless figurines were found in Nargizava. One of them consists of three circles with three semi-human heads on a long neck with rings on the upper part. "The heads are oval-shaped, and the eyes and nose were made by notching" [Quluzadə, Ağayev, 2012, с.62]. The area of the nose is formed by depressions. Another similar figure consists of two vertically connected rings with a head on a long neck on top. "The mouth, eyes and ears were marked by very small indentations" [Quluzadə, Ağayev, 2012, с.62]. According to F. Halilli, these are images of a dragon, including a three-headed one [Xəlilli, 2015, с.29-30]. Describing these figures, he notes that there are eyes, nose, mouth, ears and mustache. Ancient people gave the images of gods a fantastic look, in order to emphasize their divinity. Therefore, polymorphism in the sculptures under study indicates the image of a deity.

Stamps and marks. The ceramic vessel from Mingachevir settlement of the 3rd–5th centuries carries images divided by R. Vahidov into stamps and marks. The number of stamps found reaches 20 including quadrilateral, circle, and oval. According to R.Vahidov, these are personal seals of potters; one of these seals was found in the settlement [Vahidov, 1961]. Besides, up to 200 marks were found, mainly duplicated, but some are unique. Worthy of attention are the signet rings found in Mingachevir [Бабаев, 2010, с.18]. They were used as seals, that is, in functionality they are close to stamps. In general, among the motifs used as a stamp or seal, there are cult-magical, astral, abstract-geometric, pictorial – (anthropomorphic, zoomorphic, floral, household items, military accessories (bow, arrows, etc.) and pictographic symbols.

In Caucasian Albanian art, there are various marks that could be symbols or stamps (tamgas) of a tribe, clan or family. The use of stamps is recorded in Siberia, Central Asia, Turkey, the Black Sea region, Altai, the Caucasus, Mongolia, and Tuva. Tamgas developed from common ancestral to individual ownership marks. The most ancient are ancestral tamgas which, as a rule, are images of totems. The tribal marks among the population of Caucasian Albania are represented by images of totem animals (deer, aurochs, etc.), geometric abstract signs in

the form of lines and their combinations (**Fig. 18**) and astral signs (**Fig. 19, 20**) (circle, crescent, cross, swastika, spiral). These symbols, like many others, reflected the worldview of the ancient people.

Based on the many years' studies of the art of Caucasian Albania, art historian N.Rzayev came to the conclusion about the cult nature of the art of the artists of ancient Azerbaijan [Pзaев, 1976, c.190]. Our studies of a huge array of pictorial symbols once again confirmed that the art of Caucasian Albania was closely interconnected with the cult and religious views of its inhabitants, deeply rooted in local lore. Consequently, the original and main function of pictorial symbols was to store and carry religious information. The nature and theme of the pictorial symbolism of Caucasian Albania allows us to speak of the existence of an integral multi-element religious system which included the *cult of nature* (astral, water, earth and floral), embodied at an early stage in the image of the Mother Goddess (fertility), *totemistic cults* (animals and plants), *the cult of the patron ancestors of the clan*, *the funeral cult* and the associated *animistic cult*, as well as Zoroastrianism. The symbols used to express these

beliefs are polysemantic and the symbols carried different shades of meaning at different historical stages.

It should be noted that these concepts, cults and religions developed their own complex ritual practice, of which the indispensable elements were symbols. Religious worldview was the determining factor influencing human life. Therefore, man literally surrounded himself with pictorial symbols, both in order to protect himself from evil and to attract good forces and their patronage. Another important conclusion is that the subjects, symbols, and ways to depict them, which are repeated and characteristic of Caucasian Albania, are evident of a cultural community and deep traditions of the development of art, the multi-ethnic and multi-faith population living here.

The novelty of the paper lies in the fact that for the first time it provides a classification of pictorial symbols found in Caucasian Albania by the following types: anthropomorphic, astral, geometric, zoomorphic, floral, polymorphic, as well as stamps and signs dating back to the 4th century BC–3rd century AD.

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Vahabova Dilara

*Leading Research Fellow of the Department of
Theoretical and Methodological Problems of Science History
Institute of Science History of ANAS, PhD in Art Studies*

“ALBANIAN ORATORIO”. PAGES FROM NAMIG MAMMADOV’S OEUVRE

The name of Namig Mammadov, Honored Artist of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Laureate of the Humay Prize, head of the Department of Academic Painting and Composition of the Azerbaijan State Academy of Arts, is well known in Azerbaijan, both in artistic circles and to a wide audience. He is featured in TV shows and popular magazines. The artist has been exhibiting his works for nearly 35 years. Today, the busy schedule of N.Mammadov’s exhibitions, both personal and collective, includes such countries as Russia, Georgia, Turkey, Germany, France, Norway and Denmark. In this regard, we wouldn’t be exaggerating to say that today Namig Mammadov is one of the most “open” Azerbaijani artists, because he has already completed twelve personal exhibitions. By the way, not every artist has a propensity to such frequent dialogue with a wide audience. Mammadov’s solo exhibitions have been held with amazing regularity since 1996, and this is indicative of the artist’s position, his attitude to his work as an integral part of the artistic life of Azerbaijan.

So, what are the features of this master’s idiom? What makes his work so attractive to the viewer?

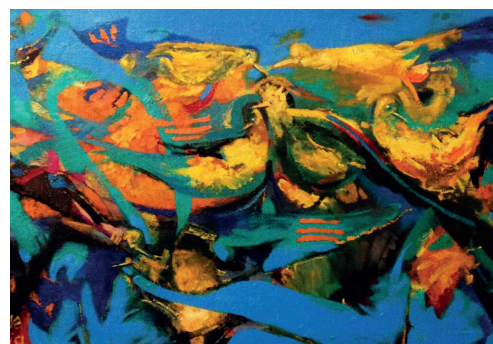
If you look at the artist’s works of different periods, you realize that throughout his fruitful activity he periodically changes his personal style so that all the creative background of Namig Mammadov today is a kind of a set of large cycles corresponding to a particular decade. At the same time, the cycles created at different stages of the artist’s career are completely equivalent in terms of the skill of painting, regardless of whether the works belong to an early or a later period.

Paintings of the 1990s make up a brilliant artistic ensemble consisting of different genres, but characterized by integrity in the very approach of the artist to the canvas. This is a complex, multi-layered painting, when many colors are brought to a single tonal denominator, and the final result is certainly

marked by a sense of the mystery taking place on the canvas. Still lives, landscapes, figure compositions were equally distinguished by a harmonious ratio of colors, usually based on the principle of contrast.

By the end of the 1990s, there was a certain selection both in color preferences, the nature of the application of paints, and in the subject, which increasingly focuses on the family and female images. Women and girls shown in a free brush work, in a red-yellow “flamboyant” tonality, firmly settle in the artist’s studio, for many years becoming the main sphere of attraction of his attention.

For Azerbaijani art, that was a difficult, transitional period, when painting in the Azerbaijani art school was still the leading fine art, but the works of conceptual art were increasingly being introduced



“Spring”



“Still life in blue”

into the exhibition environment. Traditions and innovations coexisted peacefully on the same exposition sites, and both of them were of equal interest to different generations of artists: mature masters tried their hand increasingly at the “cutting edge technology”, while the young more and more “got used” into a pictorial art, creating numerous works of the highest artistic quality.

For almost ten years since the first conceptual art exhibition in Azerbaijan, Namig Mammadov still indulged in meditation in colors, like dervishes following the once chosen path. In the interminable debate of “ratio versus sensus” (“reason versus feelings”), the artist preferred feelings, and painting – “living writing” – seemed only too natural to the traits of his character: the lyrical perception of life, the beauty of the objective world, love and family, finally, faith and desire to reveal the hidden...

But, as is known, not only man manipulates things. Things themselves, carrying a certain semantics, are able to influence us, hypnotizing, inspiring us with specific ideas and awakening specific emotions in us.

The manner of painting is changing. The voluminous, spontaneously created naked with energetic strokes give way to the planar, disembodied shadow figures. Sensuality was replaced by ephemerality, the “crimson” passion gave way to “blue” meditation. The large series of such “blue” (or “turquoise”) compositions are painted in one key whose essence can be defined as the visualization of spirituality. It is amazing how the simplest, elementary, geometrized manner ultimately gives rise to individual and distinctive images. Even more striking is the fact that through all these dots and lines in the elementarily drawn characters, a certain psychological state suddenly appears.

As a result, in the paintings of the current decade, the artist appears in a different, new hypostasis. Some images and themes, like “threads of memory”, date back to the past, to the remote 1990s. These are, of course, the themes of family, love, beauty (both woman’s and the world’s), and the mystery that lives in them. But there are also new, seemingly unexpected characters who have firmly penetrated the artist’s consciousness, defining the theme of many of his recent paintings. This is the image of a soldier (a military musician or a guard), of the lay people, and finally, lovers - dancing and singing. However, a light shade of bitterness - the author’s obvious alienation

from this hectic world - seeps through all these everyday scenes.

His toolkit was enriched with new material – capacious, textured, with a special flavor, which could be described as “lack of flavor”. These are newspapers, with scraps of which the background in N.Mammadov’s paintings is literally “paved” in a thick layer.

The artist expressed this newspaper aspect most visibly in his canvases named “Aggression”. In the compositions, people are squeezed, as if in front of the viewer’s eyes, with “information fields”, which,



*Thor Heyerdahl and his wife
in Namig Mammadov's workshop.
Baku, September 2000*

like a jack, irresistibly squeeze society, turning it into a homogeneous mass.

In “The Military Musician”, the figure of a trumpeter in golden and crimson stands out in contrast against a gray, “ordinary” background made



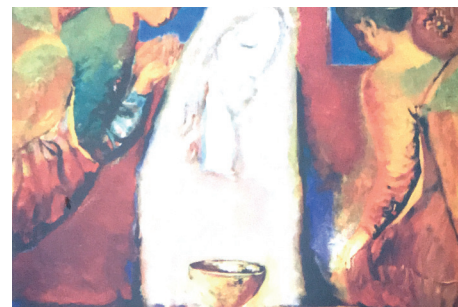
up of newspaper scraps. The “golden” trumpet - a clot of sunlight, the physical and semantic center of the composition – is shown as a jewel, as something really important and meaningful.

In “The Family”, a close-knit group of four figures, almost “walled up” in the newspaper background, like an island on which no one lies, is not hypocritical and does not betray. In “The Dessert”, there is a “wall of misunderstanding” between the figures - a thickened, stifling space that sows disunity between the participants in the meal.

The artist is extremely persistent in his visual range. He thinks in colors that have a specific meaning for him, he builds compositions from certain objects that must necessarily accompany each other. So, female images in his paintings, are as a rule accompanied by flowers. This can be an ordinary common potted plant, like a ficus which is very common in everyday life. But in Namig Mammadov’s paintings, it turns into a symbol of purity and divinity,



“Kemenche”



“The Grail”

just as in medieval compositions the white lily accompanied the image of the Mother of God.

The association with religious art is not accidental here. In many of Namig Mammadov’s paintings, there is a deep sacredness, although the image does not seem to contain any targeted symbols. The subtle spirituality, inner contemplation and the seemingly suspended silence are clearly felt when perceiving such works as “On the Way”, “The Arrival”, “The Turquoise Space”. And one wants to hold one’s breath so as not to disturb this delicate balance between the corporeal and the incorporeal, between passion and contemplation, between flesh and soul, which is the main content of these works. It is not the image that matters in them, not the color ratios, but something else that cannot be expressed in words, which, incidentally, distinguishes painting from verbal expression.

Among the works of Namig Mammadov, there is a series of pastel drawings titled “The Prayer”. The artist has been working on them for almost his entire conscious life. The monochrome, ocher-colored sheets carry various motives: worshipers, travelers, musicians. Plastic images barely emerging from



«The Sacrificial Lamb”



“The Escape”



“Blessing”

the background, in a leisurely, endless succession replace each other, like guardian angels, accompanying the artist for many years. All these phantom images, as if alive, in real time, emerging and dissolving in the space of the sheet in front of the viewer's eyes, clearly testify to a certain inner vision of the artist, his tendency to visualize the immaterial, spiritual world, invisible to an ordinary person.

This belief, "secret knowledge" is not available to everyone and not everyone is able to recognize them. One day, the guests from Norway who visited the artist's studio were able to feel all this, not even knowing how soon they would recall these works filled with mysticism.

This story is almost 20 years old. Among the Norwegian guests who visited Namig Mammadov's studio and appreciated his work was the famous Norwegian traveler, researcher, ethnographer Thor Heyerdahl, who after visiting the Church of St. Elisha in Kish initiated restoration of this Albanian monument with the participation of the Norwegian government.

This was a significant event in the political and spiritual life of Azerbaijan. A joint project between Azerbaijan and Norway to carry out archaeological excavations and restoration of the temple was launched in 2000 with the financial support of the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. On the part of Azerbaijan, the organization responsible for the project was the Azerbaijan University of Architecture and Construction under the leadership of the Rector of the University, Professor Gulchokra Mammadova. On the Norwegian part, the main entity involved was Norwegian Humanitarian Society for Archaeological Research and Restoration. The excavations were headed by Ph.D. in Architecture, famous archaeologist, Senior Research Fellow at the Institute of Archeology and Ethnography of ANAS, professor Vilayat Kerimov [Гошгарлы, 2002, с.54-56; Мамедова, 2002, с.41-49; Керимов, 2003].

The talented Azerbaijani composer Galib Mammadov was inspired by the restoration to create a number of works on Albanian themes. As part of the Azerbaijani-Norwegian cooperation program, he became close with the Norwegian writer Eyvind Skeie who later created the libretto of Galib Mammadov's "Albanian" works. The brightest and most monumental among them is the "Oratorium Albanum" cantata, which, in turn, inspired Namig Mammadov to create the "Albanian Oratorio" series.

E.Skeie used the original texts of the Old and New Testaments as the text of the oratorio. However, given that the culture of Caucasian Albania is a conglomerate of traditions and languages of many peoples, the amalgamation of which, ultimately, formed the gene pool of traditional Azerbaijani culture, the composer saturated the majestic fabric of the chorales with the intonations of a number of Azerbaijani mugams – Shur, Chahargah, Bayati-Shiraz, Humayun – and used kemenche as one of the solo instruments. According to music critics, the idea of "Oratorium Albanum" was based on the comprehension of the most important stage in the history of Azerbaijan - the period of Caucasian Albania, one of the earliest centers of Christianity in the Caucasus.

It is noteworthy that in the "Albanian Oratorio" series consisting of 30 pieces of painting and graphics, Namig Mammadov, like the composer, tried to recreate an exclusively author's interpretation of the generally accepted Christian iconography.



Oslo. September, 2004



"Sacrification"



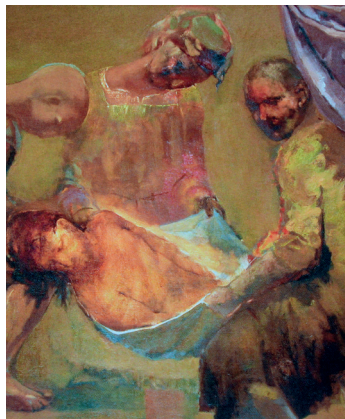
*Writer Eyvind Skeie at the exhibition
"Oratorium Albanum"
in the Fredrikstad
Cathedral. November 5, 2004*



"The Water of Life"



"The Mother"



"The Descent from the Cross"

The "Albanian Oratorio" exhibition was held with great éclat on September 25, 2003, in the Art Salon in Baku.

It is amazing how traditional images and plots of biblical and evangelical history are in no way associated with any famous monuments of world culture. But even a purely individual interpretation of the sacred history does not deprive the presented images of deep spiritual fulfillment.

This is especially true for the pastels: shadow figures barely showing through on the "time-worn" "walls" make the viewer look deeper and deeper, grasp and ultimately ponder on the action presented on small sheets. Everything here is filled with a special silence, so that the images devoid of any stylistic association seem to speak here about one thing: the deep, universal, almost subconscious rootedness of the idea of the Divine in our lives, minds, souls.

A kind of continuation of the exhibition in Baku was a similar exhibition of the artist in Norway, which was held there on November 5–14, 2004. "Albanian Oratorio" series was a great success. The exhibition was organized in Oslo and Fredrikstad (in the Fredrikstad Cathedral). The very fact of exhibiting works in the church significantly emphasized the spiritual significance of these works and especially the sacred essence of the subjects to which they were dedicated. The importance the Norwegian side gave to this show is evidenced by the fact that prior to the opening of the exhibition, the Prime Minister of Norway, Mr. Kjell Magne Bondevik, received the artist together with his wife Nigar khanum. The exhibition was attended by many Norwegian artists, writers and journalists. Among them was one of the most influencing painters in Norway, Tario Grostad.

The exhibition in the cathedral got a lot of news coverage. The author of the "Oratorium Albanum" music Galib Mammadov also came to Norway. As part of this event, a cultural meeting was organized where Namig Mammadov's works were discussed and G. Mammadov performed his piano music. In general, the meeting was devoted to the discussion of the ancient and medieval periods of the history of Azerbaijan and, first of all, the pages related to Caucasian Albania.

... And today, the artist is full of energy and creative ideas. Who knows what other formal and imaginative solutions will arise as he is wandering in search of spirituality in this bottomless world called "painting"? One thing is certain: this process is unstoppable, because can you stop a prayer?

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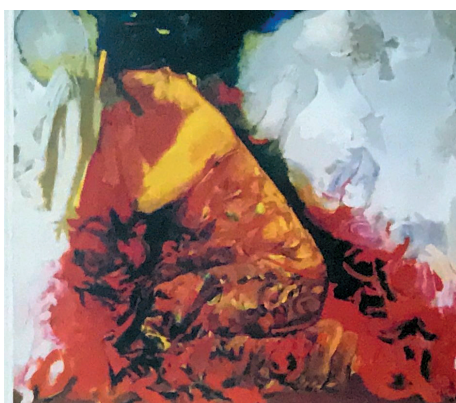
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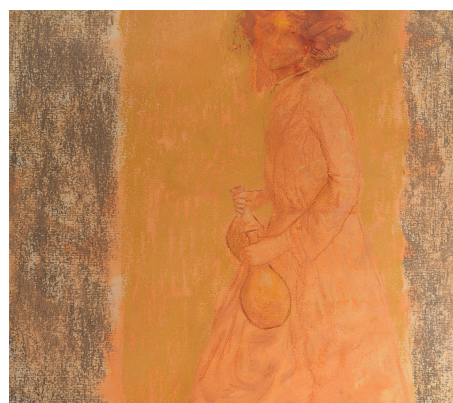
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Baku. Museum of Modern Art



"The Prayer"



From "The Prayer" series

Zammatteo Paolo*Architect and art teacher, Trento (Italy)*

AZERBAIJAN'S CHRISTIANS IN ITALY: COMANO TERME AND ITS STONE RELICS

The study deals with the Christian art of the Caucasian Albania and its arrival in northern Italy in the early Middle Ages. At that time in Italy the Church was not homogeneous. Aquileia and Milan were schismatic from Rome and Byzantium. The Lombard Romanesque style was born of Latin, Norman and above all Eastern influences. There are examples of Christian art in the Caucasian Albania alongside the Aryan and Nestorian ones. The artifacts come from the stone quarries north of Lake Garda or are found on the pilgrimage routes near Parma and Varese. Moreover, not far from Aquileia and Ravenna there are places like Udine or Udine, which have the same root as the Udine ethnic group.

From northern Italy the representations spread to the west thanks to the Irish monks. In the Christ Church of Dublin the external decorations of the transept are the same as those of the portal of the Church of St. Elysee in Nij.

The cross of Caucasian Albania and the ancientness of its Church

The Christian temples of the period of Caucasian Albania are symbols of Azerbaijan's independence. This ancient state is surrounded by legend, in the same way as the apostolic origins of its Church. Italian designer Bruno Munari was known to say "I hear and I forget, I see and I remember". Objects tell stories. To understand the antiquity of the Church of Caucasian Albania one must study the shapes by which it is represented.

The cross. The most important shape of all is the cross: it collects images that come from the most ancient religions on Earth. One of the most tangible proofs of the spread of Christianity in the first century is the SATOR: some of them have been found in Pompeii, which was destroyed in year 79 BC. It is mixed with the flames-sacred to the Zoroastrianism and to Sun devotees.

The shape of the temples. The easiest shape for temples today reminds us the first evolution of the domus ecclesiae of the 2nd and 3rd centuries. In that period, they underwent the influence of the Chaldean Syrian Church, inspired by Nazarene culture [Mamedova, 2006]. The main theme considered is the Resurrection that is common to both the Church of Caucasian Albania and the dyophysitism.

Birth and death. There are no baptisteries and the spread of sacred sepulchral monuments is a common prerogative with the Nestorianism. These monuments could have been used as evidence to the Calif Abd al-Malik to persuade him to incorporate the Church of Caucasian Albania in the Armenian Apostolic Church [Johannes Rau, 2011]. The relations between the Church of Caucasian Albania and Jerusalem Church is stronger than those between the Church of Caucasian Albania and Byzantium [Mamedova, 2006].

The domes. The shape and height of the domes in many of the churches related to the Church of Caucasian Albania are like the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem: truth to be told, it used to be a temple to celebrate the Sun. Decorations are minimal: there is only a cross in the center. There is no reference to the material dimension of the cosmos.

The language of images of the Church of Caucasian Albania is truly born in the 1st century. What I have discovered studying the Church of Caucasian Albania [Marcigliano, Mecca, Visintainer, Zammatteo, 2014, p.67-119; Mamedova, 2006] seems to suggest that its sacred motives reached Western Europe. Northern Italy was the further point reached beyond the borders of the Byzantine Empire. The relations between these different populations influenced the esthetics, the arts and the meaning itself of Christian images. In the first church of Vigo Lomasso, located in Trentino [Gian Pietro Brogiolo, Enrico Cavada, Monica Ibsen, Nicoletta Pisu, Matteo Rapana, 2013] nowadays only few parts of that building are visible.

From Caucasia to Europe

A fascinating journey through oral traditions and epic spaces in an area between Europe and Asia that has always been crossed by civilizations and whose landscape shows the contrasts of modernity and the remains of history. The past of Caucasian Albania is represented by the churches and the still numerous traces of material culture. A place has become emblematic for the whole region, Shaki. Here, within a radius of few kilometers, there is a resident linguistic minority: the Udi, who speak an idiom probably heir to the ancient Albanian language, the Albanian Christian rite currently in use and some sacred buildings.

The most celebrated is the church of St. Elysee in Kish. It's followed by the Cathedral of Nij. The churches were both modelled on archaic typologies and then transformed but retaining their original characters. St. Elysee in Kish has a central plan, funerary like the Anastasis of Constantine I in Jerusalem and with the same solar implications: the central part is high, the internal space limited, the base plan and the three added niches cannot rival the importance of the lantern and the dome, covered with a simple conical roof. The other temple is also in the district of Shaki, in Nij: it has a classroom shape, tripartite and severe, with strong columns and regular arches.

Architectures like these can be also found in northern Italy: the St. Elisee in Nij model is particularly widespread. In the static system of the new buildings, which was progressively getting more and more complex, the walls became more massive, the openings fewer and larger, the central nave narrower. The result was that there wasn't a simultaneous view of the entire interior space any longer, the space was divided into a succession of full and empty spaces, the light, no longer uniform as in the Byzantine basilicas, was filtered, with exposed areas alternating with deep cones of shadow, the structure was no longer a succession of planes and the emerging structural elements became more evident.

Studying carefully both the buildings in Kish and in Nij, it is possible to recognize elements of the apostolic, early Christian and Persian tradition next to details of Islamic inspiration. It is proof of a moment of syncretism, of the virtuous collaboration

between Arab workers and Albanian architects, or even evidence of the fact that in the 13th century the churches were built directly by Islamic experts, as happened, in the same period, in Norman Sicily in Cefalù and the cloister of Monreale.

Even the shape of religious buildings sometimes recalls the same motifs: this is the case of Nij, which has a tripartite plan that closes in three apses. In addition, Nij has a pre-Romanesque layout with round arches and large roughly shaped columns that could also be Teutonic pillars, Gothic-like arches in the central nave and a wall painting depicting "St. George and the Dragon" in front of the hall of the southern transept, which makes the basilica very similar to a western church. St. George is the same of many other Western representations. The direct technique coincides, but the frieze at the base of the painting, which reproduces the eight-rayed sun, is more important. Similar symbols, alluding to baptism, were found on the cloaks of the cavalry, high on the back, so that the fighters could be identified by infantry and archers to avoid being hit by friendly weapons. Furthermore, the same uniform had to present the Albanian cross on the chest, the same one that appears in the lunettes of the doors on the churches and in the Alban temples.

The details of the shelves supporting the arches along the walls and the architrave of the pointed arch side door of the basilica of Nij are clearly of Islamic origins. The aspect is that of the polygonal drops, which adorn niches and arches of the Arab palaces: let's take again as an example Italy and Sicily, this time with the Castle of the Zisa in Palermo and its sumptuous motifs inside the decorative Famitid Walls.

The research study analysis this essay deals with was carried out after analysing all these elements. It is meant to remove any doubt about the limit that is time and the limit that is current geography.

The Christians of Caucasian Albania in Italy

In the Middle Ages, the Arab invasion of the 7th century and the decline of Caucasian Albania after a brief rebirth in the 13th century led to a significant migration, not only of ideas but also of people. Especially in non-Byzantine Italy, the *Longobardia maior*, the signs of that transfer are not uncommon. Uti is the ancient name of Udi. The Latins called

the Montone river near Ravenna Utis [Della lingua de'primi abitatori dell'Italia opera postuma del Padre Stanislao Bardetti della Compagnia di Gesii Teologo di S.A.S. il Signor Duca di Modena In Modena MDCCCLXXII Presso la Societa Tipografica Con Licenza de'Superiori, 156]. The name of the city of Udine, which is mentioned for the first time in the Middle Ages, also comes from Oudhn, "small mountain" [Giovanni Battista Della Porta, Giovanni Frau, 1991]. The only Italian town named after Sant'Eliseo is located a few dozen kilometers from Udine near the village of Pers (from Persi, Persiani) along the main road in the direction of the port of Aquileia.

A first link seems to be recognizable in the mosaics of Sant'Apollinare Nuovo in Ravenna, the Byzantine capital in Italy, was dominated by the Ostrogothic king Theodoric the Great (6th century). "The Three Kings, who bring gifts to the Heavenly King", Jesus, wear Persian clothes and Phrygian caps, made in the 19th century by the Roman restorer Felice Kibel, who replaced the original Byzantine crowns imitating two ancient reliefs, the chapel of Saints Quirico and Julitta and the sarcophagus of the exarch Isacio (5th century): they are certainly related to Utis, the ancient name of the river on the northern border of the Exarchate.

The church of St. Elysee in Kish is said to have been built on the site of a martyrdom and has the central plan of a mausoleum, like St.Vitale in Ravenna, erected by Justinian I after the Byzantine reconquest. Both buildings must be compared to the mausoleum of Theodoric, also located in Ravenna.

Ostrogoths and Caucasian Albanians shared the same religious origins characterized by the worship of Odin: later the Ostrogoths would translate the figures of Watan into the Christian God and that of Thor, his son, into Christ: they embraced the Aryan faith because Thor-Christ is a minor deity compared to the Father.

The Aryan Baptistery reflects the same vision and taste for minimal interior decoration, reserving the spiritual character to the dome, the symbolic sky of that celestial cosmogony. Comparisons regarding the cross are found with the Basilica of Sant'Apollinare in Classe and with the Mausoleum of Gaila Placidia. Evidently in late antiquity there had been a very strong contiguity between the autocephalous Church of Albania Caucasica and Arianism.

In western Trentino between the late empire and the Lombard age (5th–8th centuries)

Italian's Apine area – which covers an area from the Valtellina to the Valli Giudicarie - has developed its cultural specificities during the Iron Age (5th century BC). This period was characterized by common pottery styles, an autonomous writing tradition that used the North-Etruscan alphabet also known as the "Camuno" or "di Sondrio" alphabet and the use of the same figurative language. Those decorations, practiced for a long time, show a period of isolation of the stonemasons concentrated in the north of Lake Garda and in the Jewish quarries. The most refined works are carried out in the Lundo quarry in Lomaso. The exclusivity of the weaving and the multiplicity of variations on the theme of the cross that developed between the 6th and 9th centuries are the characteristic traits of the area of study. Elsewhere in the territories of Lombard domination (568–774), vegetable and zoomorphic ornaments or geometric figures built on possible symmetries with series of concentric circles prevailed.

The cross of Caucasian Albania, which in the 3rd and 6th centuries excelled among the others elaborated by the neighbouring Christian communities, is particularly clear and evocative: it has its origins in the solar and mysterious cults that in Caucasia are present in Mazdeism, Zoroastrianism and Mithraism. Pythagoras/Dionysus practices the Orphic Mysteries; as a child he looks east towards the sunrise, he speaks to the Caucasus river. The cross of Caucasian Albania is the symbol of a rich and lively culture and the investigation of Albanian influences in Italy is based on the symbol which is common to the two cultures.

Some sculpted elements coming from the Lundo quarry, and from the area near the small church of San Silvestro and the Pieve di Vigo Lomaso where they were partly reused, are evidence of the contacts with the art of Caucasian Albania.

San Lorenzo is overlooked by the community castle, ancient settlement in the picturesque setting of the basin of Lomaso, and around 1000–1100 was subject of a rebuilding of an earlier church (7th century). Many of the carved stones were reused (the portal, the altar of the baptistery) or found

nearby. The facade buttresses and ribbed ceiling date back to 1300–1350. The external apse dates back to 1497: the aisles and side chapels are later, as it is the extension of the facade, perfectly recognizable. San Lorenzo is the most complete example of *Pieve Rurale* in Trentino: church, baptistery, canonical house with rustic and cemetery. It is one of the most precious works of Lombard art in the area: originally Romanesque, tripartite and with three apses, then enriched with Gothic arches, enlarged and elevated, it is above all its spirituality that brings it closer to the basilica of Nij.

There is an evident parallelism between the fragments of the Carolingian age interwoven with meanders and with the crosses in relief on oolitic stone of Lomaso and with the crosses of the Albanian Church.

Curiously, there is a very recent re-elaboration outside the transept: it is an astile cross inside an arched portal from which three rays appear. A bronze fibula with an iron brooch that was found in Montagnaga di Pine in eastern Trentino [Report by Michele Toldo, 2016] has the same motif and the rays circumscribe a Greek cross between two symmetrical figures of peacock. It can be associated with the motif of a 7th century capital found at Mingachevir now at the National Museum of History of Azerbaijan in Baku. The bronze of the fibula, burnished for its high percentage of tin, shows that it doesn't come from the factories of the Alpine range, where the alloy is formed mainly of copper: instead, in Eastern Europe, the mineral was obtained mainly from the Azerbaijani river deposits of Kura and Araks.

The only surviving example in the region is the Romanesque baptistery of San Lorenzo, which houses a lapidary of fragments from the oldest church and other prestigious buildings in the environs. The base on which a man stands with *labrys* of probable Celtic workmanship (2nd century BC) is prestigious.

Among the other finds, one stands out because it reinforces the hypothesis of the arrival of artistic elements of Caucasian Albania in the quarries of Lomaso: a corner stone reused in the nearby church of San Silvestro must be compared for importance. In the altar of the baptistery of Vigo Lomaso, inside a woven frame (which may be oriental in style), two peacocks face each other in perfect symmetry. Moreover, not only in the Christian symbols but also

particularly close to the solar crosses, the reliefs of Vigo Lomaso and Azerbaijan emanate the same sense of eternity thanks to the material, the stone, and the curved decorative motifs that intertwine seamlessly.

In northern Italy

At the time of the Late Empire, those who arrived in the Alps from Caucasia had previously passed through the wool market of Aquileia – second only to Rome – and had gone up the branches of the flock route, then *Via Longobarda*. Proof of this is the locality of Sant'Eliseo near Udine; traces remain on the Vicentine Highlands [Armando De Guio, Paolo Zammattéo (a cura di), Luserna: la storia di un paesaggio alpino, Atti del convegno "Sul Confine... Percorsi tra archeologia, etnoarcheologia e Storia lungo i passi della Montagna di Luserna", p.43-61] and between Lana d'Adige and Milan along the pilgrimage routes of Western Trentino and the Lombardy Alps: Anaunia, Val di Sole, Val Camonica, Valtellina.

There were many churches such as the original San Lorenzo or Sant'Eliseo in Nij in the Lombardy foothills of the Alps, and they had existed since the 7th–8th centuries. An important comparison is possible with Castelseprio, an ancient village near Varese. There, while the cruciferous tombs are remarkably simple compared to those in Trentino, the religious buildings are surprisingly close to the architecture of Vigo Lomaso and Shaki.

The Basilica of St. John the Evangelist (5th–6th century), facing east, was divided into three naves without an external apse, added only later. It was located next to the octagonal baptistery, like San Lorenzo, and the interior environment resembled that of the church of Nij. The 6th–7th century frontal altar plate, believed to have come from the same church and now on display in the Gallarate Museum of History and Art, recalls the silhouettes of four Albanian crosses. St. Paul (11th century), with a central plan, had a marked upward development: ideally merging it with the oldest church of Santa Maria *foris Portas* (6th century), the result is exactly superimposable on the structure of St. Elysee in Kish.

For the West, we can speak of a Christian culture not dissociated from a technological culture that had many premises and flourished in the late Middle Ages with the first truly European style,

the Romanesque. In the Lombard area, the new style appeared early, starting in the second half of the 10th century. Some experiments linked to the phenomenon of parish churches, characteristic of this period and particularly numerous in the areas of Como and Varese, are fundamental stages for the origin of the style: they are mostly mountain churches that allowed a capillary control over the territory of the county, now forgotten but once located on important lines of communication with northern Europe. Usually the buildings, made mainly of stone or pebbles, have a single nave, not always semicircular apse, roof with exposed beams. In the interior, smooth surfaces, suitable for frescoing, prevail: these small buildings generally preserve some of the most beautiful pictorial cycles of the time, while sculpture is less widespread.

The manuals of the Lombard tradition known as *comacina*, which illustrate the techniques of the ornament for architecture [Marazzi, 1931, Voll. 1-III, 1931], are well informed about this fact: while the Byzantine decoration descended from the Greek acanthus, the motifs with plant volutes, weave and facing zoomorphic representations came directly from Christian Persia.

Robert Mobili told me about another coincidence (2017). Among the Udin the surname Dalian is considered one of the oldest and most patriarchal and in Italy it is shared by more than five hundred families. Going back to the period before the 16th century following the dynastic line is impossible, but it is not difficult to find out where those families live. In 2017, 200 were in Reggio Emilia nuclei out of 548, 180 in Modena, 20 in Bologna: that is, 77 percent were located along the *Via Francigena*, also involving the cities of Parma with nine nuclei, Ferrara with two and one in Piacenza [Web source: Cognomix.it.].

After the 5th century, Ravenna inherited the role of the port of Aquileia and the *Via Francigena* became the most natural route to the west. It is the history of art that still provides new clues: a pilgrimage church stood where now there is the cathedral of Berceto (Parma). The ancient frontal altar plate is set in the current high altar, as by pure coincidence also happens in the baptistery of San Lorenzo in Vigo Lomaso in Trentino. Berceto opens up a wider horizon about the Caucasian medieval elites and the export of models from their places of origin. The typicalness of crosses and recurrent

zoomorphic motifs proves this: the cruciferous decoration of Berceto is similar to those of the fibula of Montagnaga di Pine in Trentino and the capital of Mingachevir preserved in Baku. The fundamental theme common to the religious architecture of the time is the Resurrection and peacocks with obvious references to eternity.

Ancient influences: Irish monks and Caucasian design

Let's consider the side portal of St. Elysee in Nij: its moldings of Sasanian inspiration or manufacture (5th–7th century) reappear mysteriously on the oldest Dublin Cathedral in Ireland, the Christ Church dating back to 1100. From the Italian epicentres evidently the sacred art of Caucasian Albania also influenced the Irish and British insular art, that is the Celtic and Norman art in general, when the two countries became Christian between the 5th and the 10th centuries.

The interweaving of knots had to reach Ireland through the first monastic missions, which adopted it for the production of books: the indigenous Irish decorative tradition, which used mainly spirals and woven circles, reworked those contributions to achieve an original style and later all their art would take possession of the same motifs for the stone: the Pictish Stones in Scotland, the Anglo-Saxon tomb crosses and the Cathedral of Christ in Dublin provide ample evidence.

The Irish monks left with their families for the barbarian kingdoms formed in continental Europe after the fall of the Roman Empire: they migrated to northern Italy and Tuscany to convert the new peoples to Christianity and followed a route from the British Isles through Brittany, the Loire and the Frankish kingdom to cross the Alps.

The genetic results of the Celtic-British haplogroup R-L21, with a 5-10% spread between the Po Valley and the Tuscan-Emilian Apennines, could be justified by the presence of Irish religious settlements throughout the early Middle Ages. Irish monasticism was characterized by considerable freedom from central ecclesiastical power. In the 6th century, the monks were free to marry. Celibacy was imposed only after the Council of Cashel (1101): it was also possible to pass on the religious charge to one's children, creating real monastic dynasties [Kehnel, 2008].

In the 6th century, the Lombards were still pagans or Christians of the Aryan faith [Jorg Jarnut, *Storia dei Longobardi*, 2002].

It was only in 603 that, thanks to the influence of his Catholic wife Teodolinda, Agilulfo had his son Adolaldo baptised according to the Catholic rites, offering his protection to the Irish monk Columba (or Collin) so that in 612 he could found the monastery of Bobbio [Stokes, 1892].

When the Lombards conquered Tuscany, they found an Irish bishop in Lucca called Finnian of Molville (San Frediano). The partner of San Patrizio, Sechall son of Restitus, belonged to the very noble Longobard family named *Letingi* [Stokes, *ibid.*, VII–VIII].

While Senan of Laraghbrine, an Irish monk who lived in the late 6th century, was in Inishcarra along the course of the River Lee in southern Ireland, a ship of pilgrims from Lazio arrived. The hagiographies of Frediano di Lucca (588 m), Columbano di Bobbio (542–615 m), Donato di Fiesole (874 m), Andrea da Fiesole Scoto (IX sec.), Silao di Lucca (St.Sillan, XI sec.) are well known. All those monks were of noble birth, if not of royal lineage [Stokes, *ibid.*].

Significantly Margaret Stokes, who was an archaeologist, enriched the text with illustrations of architectural details.

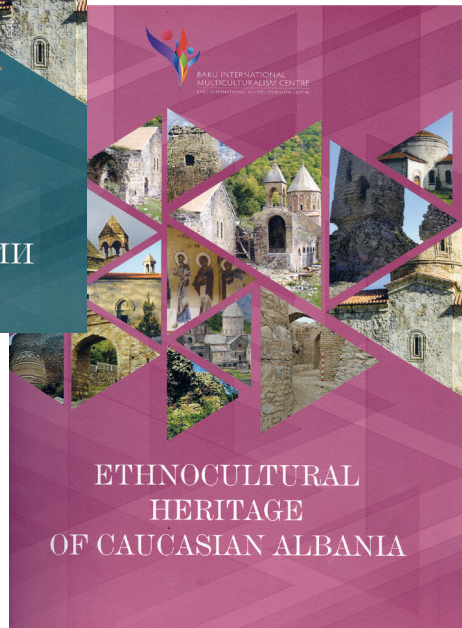
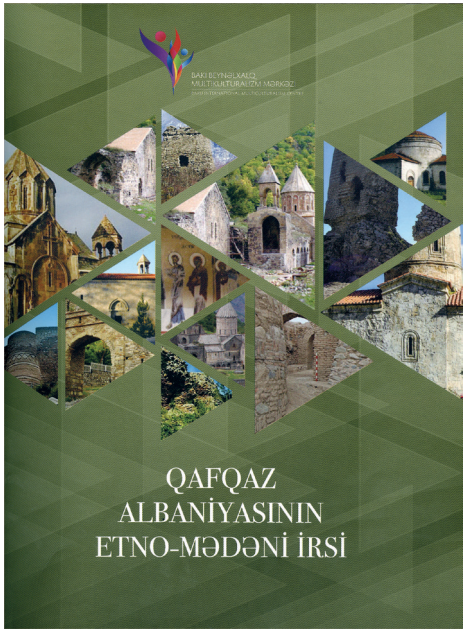
Towards the end of the 8th century, the Irish cultural heritage merged with that of the Lombards

and led to a renewal of artistic production. The *magistri comacini*, who are the authors of the Romanesque style, were a heterogeneous community of artists of various nationalities, often monks, who in the 6th century had already settled in the city of Como under the protection of the Lombard crown: enjoying special protection and a specific legal status, the *magistri comacini* spread the new Romanesque art in Europe, that universal architectural language that is the basis of the refounding of European culture. Finally, to conclude, we can recognize numerous similarities between Longobard architecture, Norman architecture and the so-called Irish Romanesque; also with the influences of the Caucasian Albania, especially in the proposition of cruciferous and zoomorphic figures and in the oldest interwoven decorations.

It was probably because of the benevolent Mediterranean geography that at the dawn of the Middle Ages an artistic relationship involved Caucasia, Italy and then all the West. At that time the relationship with religion was above all holistic. The sensation derived from images was more effective than the gospel knowledge. For the West, the linear relationship with tradition is vital. A meaningful symbol is certainly the artistic relationship established between Caucasia and northern Italy in the early centuries of Christianity, which left only few pieces, precious and rare.

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